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CANADIAN PORTRAITS

ADRIAN MACDONALD

A. C. Cossman

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Canadian Portraits

By
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TO

MY WIFE

WITHOUT WHOSE UNFAILING ASSISTANCE IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO
PREPARE THESE SKETCHES

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PREFACE

THE PERSON who picks this book up from a counter and glances through the table of contents may well be pardoned for wondering what the author has tried to accomplish. Why include such a varied assortment of names in a single volume? If these names are included, why not include several others equally outstanding? What, in short, is the unifying purpose of this book?

Let it first be understood that no attempt has been made to present all the famous men of Canada. My purpose has been to prepare a representative, rather than an exhaustive list. I have dealt with notable men chosen from various professions, various localities and various periods, in the hope that the whole would suggest something of what Canadians have achieved. Frequently I have had difficulty in determining which of several men to choose, but I have always reached a decision by asking myself, "Which was the most typical of Canada?"

My method of treatment has borrowed tricks from the story-teller. Personality and significant incident have always been given first place. Those generalities and abstractions which make political histories so clear and comprehensive to the scholar, and so unreal and

confusing to the general reader, have been kept as much as possible in the background. It may shock students of Macdonald's life, for instance, to find his famous "National Policy" dismissed in a single paragraph; but I feel that his personality is more important than his policy—whether or not the reader agrees with me, he must at least admit that it is infinitely more interesting.

A good many authorities have, of course, been used in the preparation of these "portraits," but I wish to acknowledge especially my indebtedness to the following: Miss Katherine Hughes' "Father Lacombe;" Dr. O. J. Skelton's "Life and Times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier;" M. Henri d' Arles' "Louis Fréchette;" Mr. Beckles Willson's "Life of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal." I wish also to thank those who have given me personal assistance: Miss Daisy Peel for providing me with full particulars of her brother's life and work; Dr. Norman Gwyn for giving me considerable information about his uncle, Sir William Osler; Mr. Sherman Swift, Librarian of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, for translating Fréchette's poem; and Professor Duncan McArthur, of Queen's University, for offering valuable suggestions.

—A. M.

CANADIAN PORTRAITS

I

WOLFE AND MONTCALM

IN THE governor's garden at Quebec, standing austerely amongst the clumps of leaves and clusters of flowers, and pointing its cold stone pillar eternally to the stars, is an unusual monument. Probably nowhere else in the world is there one exactly like it. Situated as it is in the neighbourhood of a famous battlefield, it commemorates with unique impartiality the renown of the victor and of the vanquished. On its base may be read the names of both Montcalm and Wolfe.

Louis Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm-Gozon de Saint-Véran, was the older of the two by fifteen years. He was born in 1712 at Candiac, a sombre, massive chateau set on high ground amongst groves of trees in a beautiful section of southern France. His ancestors on both sides of the family had followed with distinguished bravery the gentleman's profession of arms. A younger brother, Jean, whose precocious addiction to books rendered him so frail of body that he died at the age of seven, was destined for the church; but

Louis, being the elder son, was naturally trained for the army. The boys' tutor, M. Dumas, an odd, original character with the pedant's narrowness and severity, found Louis less docile than his brother, and, it would appear, dealt somewhat sternly with him. But Louis was neither a thoughtless boy nor a dullard. In a letter to his father he set forth his exemplary ambitions. "First," he wrote, "to be an honourable man, of good morals, brave, and a Christian. Secondly, to read in moderation; to know as much Greek and Latin as most men of the world; also the four rules of arithmetic and something of history, geography and French and Latin *belles lettres*, as well as to have a taste for the arts and sciences. Thirdly and above all, to be obedient and docile and very submissive to your orders and those of my dear mother; and also to defer to the advice of M. Dumas. Fourthly, to fence and ride as well as my small abilities will permit." Whatever may have been his offences against the stiff discipline of M. Dumas, this expression of his aims is most certainly beyond reproach.

At the age of fifteen he joined the army. He did not, however, forsake his studies, and after several years of military service he could inform his father that he was learning German and was still assiduously reading Greek. But he did not let his desire for learning interfere with his military career. He served with considerable distinction through campaigns on the Rhine, in Bohemia, in Italy and amongst the Alps. Twice he was wounded—once very seriously—and once he was taken prisoner.

Although much of his time was spent in the camps of war, Montcalm was anything but a reckless, swashbuckling soldier of fortune. While he marched and fought in distant lands his heart always remained at home. He became master of Candiac at the age of twenty-three, and a year later married a gentle, beautiful girl whose grand-uncle, Jean Talon, had been the famous Intendant of New France. They had a family of ten, and the happiest days of Montcalm's life were spent at home with his mother, his wife and his children. The daily routine of the landed proprietor appealed to him very strongly. He loved to wander through his orchards and vineyards while his thoughts busied themselves with the absorbing problems of his estate. In the letters which he later wrote from America he asked again and again about the success of an olive press with which he had been experimenting, and he was constantly speculating on when he would be allowed to return to his beloved Candiac.

It was while he was at Candiac in the winter of 1756 that an important official missive reached him. Eagerly he tore it open and read that he had been appointed commander of His Majesty's troops in North America. His gentle wife turned pale at the thought of his going to this wild and desolate land so far away from home, and begged him not to accept the appointment; but his mother, a high-souled matron steeped in the traditions of military service, declared that the King's wishes must be obeyed. For his part he did not hesitate, and early spring found him embarking at Brest with his secretary, his staff, his cook, and the scanty

reinforcements that King Louis felt he could spare from his European commitments.

In crossing the ocean the frigate *Licorne*, in which Montcalm sailed—it had put out to sea two or three days before the troop-ships—encountered extremely rough weather. One gale lasted for ninety hours. It was followed by dense fogs and cold. Icebergs floated often across the ship's path and on one occasion, the fog having lifted for a short time, Montcalm was able to count sixteen floating mountains of ice. And when at last the *Licorne* arrived in the mouth of the St. Lawrence it found the channel still choked with ice. Montcalm was forced to disembark thirty miles below Quebec and finish his journey in a *calèche*. "I see," he wrote back to his wife on his arrival, "that I shall have plenty of work. Our campaign will soon begin. Everything is in motion. Don't expect details about our operations; generals never speak of movements until they are over. I can only tell you that the winter has been quiet enough, though the savages have made great havoc in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and carried off, according to their custom, men, women and children. I beg you will have High Mass said at Montpellier or Vauvert to thank God for our safe arrival and ask for good success in the future."

While Montcalm was fighting his sovereign's battles in the four corners of the world, his destined antagonist was growing into man's estate in England. James Wolfe was born in the little town of Westerham, Kent, in the year 1727. From his earliest boyhood his spirit

was fired with military ardour. His father, a distinguished soldier who ultimately achieved the rank of lieutenant-general, could tell of glorious campaigning under the Duke of Marlborough, and the boy's one ambition was to follow worthily in his father's footsteps. At the age of thirteen he persuaded his sire to take him on a military expedition that was preparing against Cartagena; but his health played him false. After feasting his eyes at the port of embarkation on many marvellous sights, he fell ill and was confined to his bed until it was too late to go. But two years later, while he was home from school on his holidays, he was handed his commission (the spot in the garden where he stood as he received it is now marked by a monument) and before many years were out he had fought through some of the fiercest battles in history. Flanders, then as always, was the battle-ground of Europe, and thither Wolfe was sent. But in those days, in spite of the sudden ferocity of battles, campaigns were leisurely affairs. Much of the youthful officer's time was spent in billets, and his letters home—he was a very dutiful and affectionate son—told of his playing on the flute, going two or three times a week to the theatre, and occasionally talking a little with the ladies, whom he found "very civil." In company with a younger brother who died shortly afterwards, he took part in the battle of Dettingen with such signal courage that he was raised to the rank of lieutenant; and before he was eighteen he was in command of a company.

After several years of campaigning on the continent

Wolfe's regiment was suddenly called upon to ward off a blow threatening England herself. The Highlanders, who were always restless, had once more risen in support of their beloved Prince Charlie. On landing Wolfe was immediately despatched north with his regiment, and he was present at the dismal encounter near Falkirk, which was rendered so confusing and indecisive by a storm, and also at the wild, fierce clash at Culloden, where the hopes of the Stuarts were finally destroyed. What Wolfe saw of the untamed courage of the clansmen in these battles suggested to him the possibility of their being formed into regiments for the king; and it is probable that his urging of this project had considerable influence with Pitt, who later carried it out.

Following the rebellion of '45 Wolfe spent eleven dreary years, broken only by a short period of leave in Paris, on garrison duty in Scotland and England. The tedium of the life, with its round of petty social activities, was very irksome to his restless spirit. He burned with ambition to do something of real moment for his king and country, and he felt that his youth was slipping from him in idleness. Whenever any professor was available he continued his study of Latin and mathematics, and he read extensively on military strategy. But he yearned for something more glorious than algebra and the classics.

From his portraits one would never surmise that Wolfe's spirit was charged with restless heroism. He was the most unsoldierly looking soldier who ever lived. Tall and weedy, with flaming red hair (which usually of course was covered by a wig), he possessed a face

that was like a caricature. The upper lip fell away almost from the point of the nose; the forehead and chin receded sharply; and the neck rolled itself into one of those loose double chins that are so out of place on a lean person. And, added to his homely features, were evidences of bad health. In the chill, damp atmosphere of Scotland he developed a chronic illness (for which, by the way, he was advised to take soap internally) that reduced his complexion to an unattractive muddy hue relieved only by an unnatural flush when he was excited. Yet it is a notable fact that his contemporaries never found his unprepossessing appearance in the least repellent. His impetuous, fiery soul, with its eagerness, vivacity, and courage, shone through his eyes and belied any suggestions of weakness in his face or figure. He was, it is recorded, a very pleasant man to meet and exceedingly gallant to the ladies.

He had, indeed, all the soldier's sentimental regard for the fair sex. His mother, good soul, wished to see him comfortably united in matrimony with some respectable young lady possessing £30,000; but he, gay youth, had other notions. While on a visit to London he fell deeply in love with a lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Wales, a pretty, slight, doll-like creature, with a beautiful complexion, a taking manner, and a cold heart—cold at least towards his humble pretensions. His mother tactfully argued with him to be prudent; his father bluntly advised him to have done with such "gay philandering;" but he did not relinquish his hopes until he had fully realized that his attentions were unwelcome. He tried to drown his disappointment

by throwing himself recklessly into the dissolute life of London—an experiment completely foreign to his nature, which he never repeated, and which, it is to be feared, did not have the desired effect. For a long time he could not forget this wound to his heart; but ultimately youth reasserted itself, and when he was about to lead the last assault on Quebec he took from his neck a miniature of an attractive young lady—a Miss Lowther, daughter of General Lowther—to whom he had become engaged while on a visit to Bath, and entrusted it to a friend.

The galling inaction that so troubled Wolfe's mind finally came to an end with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War; but his letters of this period reveal him as none too hopeful of the outcome. England was in a state of lethargy: her leaders were incompetent and corrupt; her people discontented, easily alarmed and helpless. As the clouds of war thickened and one disaster after another fell upon her, Wolfe became more and more exasperated with the worthless crew who directed the destinies of the nation. He wrote to his mother: "The King of Prussia (God bless him!) is our only ally, and we are solely obliged to the Duchy of Silesia for his friendship. I am sorry that they don't all unite against us, that our strength might be fully exerted and our force known." And in a letter to his father he bursts out: "It does appear to me that we are the most egregious blunderers in war that ever took the hatchet in hand."

Before his appointment as commander of the forces

destined to capture Quebec, Wolfe served as a subordinate officer in two other military operations of the Seven Years' War. In both he showed himself to be a bold, capable, energetic leader of men. The first engagement in which he took part was the disgraceful expedition against Rochefort. A well-equipped English army, escorted by a formidable section of the navy, sailed forth to make a raid on the French coast; but after lying for a time off Rochefort, it returned without even striking a blow. Of all the officers who held commissions in the expedition Wolfe alone emerged with heightened honour. He had urged his superiors to force a landing at a spot selected by himself and to push forward a vigorous attack; but their courage had not been equal to the undertaking.

The second operation in which he was engaged was more creditable to the honour of British arms. In the summer of 1758 the great fortress of Louisbourg, in North America, was captured from the French. In the investment of Louisbourg, Wolfe, who acted as brigadier under General Amherst, won considerable renown. He led the landing party that ran in under a hail of musket balls and grape shot and stormed the French batteries along the shore: and in the siege that followed he frequently distinguished himself for his courage and vigour. When he finally returned to England his name was on everybody's lips as one of the bravest and most enterprising officers in the British army.

The winter following the capture of Louisbourg was spent by Wolfe in vain attempts to recuperate his broken

health. The sea voyages and the hardships of the summer campaign had aggravated his chronic illness; and when a message came from Pitt summoning him to London it found him in a condition much more suited to a hospital than a high command. But his zeal was irrepressible. Unhesitatingly he obeyed the summons, went to London, and came forth from the great minister's presence with the consciousness that upon him, more than upon any other officer, was to rest the honour of England. Over the heads of innumerable titled incompetents he had been chosen to command an expedition that was to set out in the spring against the capital of New France.

In accepting the appointment Wolfe stipulated only that he be allowed to select his own staff. One man in particular he wished to have by his side—an infantry officer named Guy Carleton, who at that time was little known, but who later became governor of Canada. But the King objected. Carleton, it seemed, had offended His Majesty by certain frank remarks about his Hanoverian troops. Twice the royal hand struck Carleton's name from the list, but Wolfe stood firm, until finally Pitt himself intervened and Wolfe had his way. In the matter of his own rank Wolfe asked for nothing. To appease the outraged generals who had been set aside, and who undoubtedly thought much more of position and pay than they did of danger and glory, his necessary elevation to the rank of major-general was made valid only in America, and he was left nominally subordinate to General Amherst. In England he remained what he had been

before, a simple colonel. The nobility and modesty of his attitude throughout the whole affair is clearly revealed in a letter to his mother. "I am to act a greater part in this business," he wrote, "than I wished or desired. The backwardness of some of the older officers has in some measure forced the Government to come down so low. I shall do my best and leave the rest to fortune, as perforce we must when there are not the most commanding abilities. If I have health and constitution enough for the campaign I shall think myself a lucky man. What happens afterwards is of no great consequence."

Meanwhile Montcalm had been winning for himself considerable renown in the forests of North America. The affairs of the French colony he had found in deplorable confusion. Vaudreuil, the Governor, was an affable man, extremely popular with most of the *habitants*, but weak, vacillating, and bombastic; Bigot, the Intendant, was a thorough-going scoundrel; and between the two of them they had reduced the colony to a nest of mismanagement and corruption. Things might have been improved had Montcalm been given absolute authority, but his position was anomalous. On him virtually rested the responsibility for all military undertakings; yet nominally he was commander of only the regular troops from France. The militia were under the direct control of Vaudreuil, who also, as Governor, had the last word in all decisions. Hampered by such conditions no general could be expected to do himself full justice; yet for three years Montcalm carried on aggressive warfare with almost unvarying

success against an antagonist much superior to himself in potential military strength.

He made a dash across Lake Ontario to Fort Oswego, captured it, burned it to the ground and was back again in Montreal with his prisoners and booty before the slower English generals, whose hands were tied by dissension amongst the English colonies, had recovered from their surprise. He descended upon Fort William Henry, invested it, and forced it to surrender. He successfully defended Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga), fighting without his uniform on an oppressively hot day, against a force much larger than his own. But with the accession of Pitt to power in England, and the consequent replacement of incompetent blunderers by daring and able strategists, the inexorable grip began to close about New France. Louisbourg was lost; Fort Frontenac was destroyed, and the western strongholds had to be abandoned; and the spring of 1759 brought rumours of a fresh assault preparing against Fort Carillon, and, more alarming still, of an impending attack against Quebec, the heart and capital of the colony.

At no time did Montcalm show his military genius and his courage to better advantage than when the tide of battle began to turn against New France. Hampered by the jealousy of the governor, disgusted with the villainy and meanness all about him, longing to be at home with his dear wife and family, he yet fought on with an ardour and abandon truly French. In hurried letters to his mother, his colleagues and his wife he poured out his soul. "Forgive the confusion of this

letter," he wrote. "I have not slept all night with thinking of the robberies and mismanagement and folly. Poor King, poor France, *cara patria!*" And again, disheartened with the futility of his efforts and overcome with homesickness, he sadly asked, "When shall I see my chateau of Candiac, my plantations, my chestnut grove, my oil-mill, my mulberry trees?"

When a messenger arrived from France with news that a great English fleet was being sent against Quebec, consternation was great. Montcalm, who had spent the winter in Montreal, hastened to the threatened fortress; Vaudreuil, bustling and officious, followed. Supplies were quickly gathered; the fortifications, which corrupt officials had allowed to fall into disrepair, were hastily strengthened; every man, young or old, who could bear arms was ordered to the colours. The messenger who had brought the news of the impending attack had also brought orders for Montcalm; "How small soever may be the space you are able to hold, it is indispensable to keep a footing in North America; for if we once lose the country entirely, its recovery will be almost impossible." "We will save this unhappy colony or perish," was Montcalm's answer.

The story of the siege of Quebec, with all its romantic detail—the first appearance of English mastheads below the Isle of Orleans, the vain attempt to destroy the English fleet by fireships which roared and blazed in the night like floating infernos, the terrible slaughter of Wolfe's red-coated veterans when, breaking out of control, they rushed headlong up the Montmorency

slope against Montcalm's entrenchments, the persistent and deadly bombardment of the citadel from the heights across the river, and that final heroic adventure which ended in the capture of the city—it has all been told before so often and so vividly that it need not be repeated in detail here. But a word might be said about the parts played by the two rival generals.

Montcalm was vivacious and hasty, garrulous and impatient. His fine spirit had all the fire and gaiety of the true Provençal. But he had also that genius for military affairs which seems to be peculiar to his countrymen. His mercurial disposition seldom led him into error. On the field and in the council chamber he was always thoroughly master of himself and of the situation; his head was as clear, his judgment as quick and cool as that of a trained swordsman. And above all, he was a strategist of long and varied experience. Such was the critical state of the colony, dispirited with reverses, short of supplies, apparently deserted by the mother country, that he sought only to maintain his stand until summer had passed and winter had set in. Another spring might possibly bring peace. His plans were wholly defensive, and even to-day little fault may be found with the disposition of his forces. Quebec seemed vulnerable only from below, and there he massed his army. Had he been confronted by a general of ordinary disposition and capacity his calculations would undoubtedly have proved sound. But Wolfe was a general upon whose actions it was impossible to calculate.

In the story of Wolfe's attack upon Quebec there is something that stirs the blood and inspires even the

most sluggish spirit to a desire for accomplishment. There stood the rocky citadel—a proud fortress made almost impregnable by nature and defended by a brave and skilful marshal. Before he had crossed swords with his antagonist Wolfe had written to his uncle: "If I find that the enemy is strong, audacious, and well-commanded, I shall proceed with the utmost caution and circumspection, giving Mr. Amherst time to use his superiority. If they are timid, weak and ignorant, we shall push them with more vivacity, that we may be able before the summer is gone to assist the commander-in-chief." It did not take him long to discover that the enemy was at least not "timid, weak and ignorant." With patience and energy he tried every means of attack his fertile brain could devise. He tried constant bombardment of the town and the entrenchments; he tried by laying waste the surrounding country to induce Montcalm to take the offensive; and he tried, by launching his best troops against the French lines below the town, to break his way through to the city. But all to no avail. Weeks slipped by and nothing was accomplished. Amherst, working far to the south, was apparently not to be relied upon for assistance. And to cap Wolfe's disappointment, his own health, which had always been miserable, completely broke down. In a despondent letter to his mother he sums up the situation as follows: "My antagonist has wisely shut himself up in inaccessible entrenchments, so that I can't get at him without spilling a torrent of blood, and that perhaps to little purpose. The Marquis de Montcalm is at the head of

a great number of bad soldiers, and I am at the head of a small number of good ones, that wish for nothing so much as to fight him; but the wary old fellow avoids an action, doubtful of the behaviour of his army."

But Wolfe's restless mind was never idle. Even while lying in the little stone farmhouse used as his hospital, racked with pain and nausea, he was continually devising new plans of attack; and as soon as he was able to be about he tried once more. His brigadiers, after holding a council of war, suggested that if he changed his area of operations from below the town to some point above (a change made possible by the fact that certain ships had successfully run the gauntlet of the fort's guns) he could effectually sever Quebec from the rest of the colony, and so in time would force Montcalm to leave his entrenchments and attack. Convinced that the suggestion was a wise one, Wolfe withdrew his troops from the Montmorency shore, and transferred them above the town. But slow blockading tactics were never to his liking. His was a stirring disposition, impatient and aggressive. His soul longed for some dramatic stroke that would bring immediate victory, and luck offered him his opportunity.

He learned through secret sources of information that a certain accessible portion of the cliff above the town was weakly guarded. From across the river he examined the spot carefully through his field-glasses. He took his subordinates with him to inspect it even more carefully. And then, with the utmost secrecy, he made his preparations. No effort was spared; no detail of organization escaped him; he himself attended to everything. Until the last minute not even his staff

officers knew for certain that they were about to scale that portion of the cliff which they had been observing.

When Montcalm was told that the enemy, under cover of night, had climbed the rough and wooded precipice above the town and were establishing themselves on the plain not a mile from the gates, he could not believe his ears; but galloping in haste to a point of observation, he quickly realized the full gravity of the situation. There, before his eyes, calmly forming into line of battle, was the greater part of Wolfe's army. A decision could no longer be averted. Hastily gathering his forces and cheering them on with heroic words, he led them to the assault. The battle, as was common in those days, was of short duration. Two or three crashing volleys were fired, and all was over. The British had stood firm; the French had broken and fled; Wolfe was dying in the arms of his friends; and Montcalm, sorely wounded, was being assisted within the gates, to linger a few days longer, and then to follow his late enemy into the vale of darkness and glory.

So began the British regime in Canada. A rough road lay before the newly-won colony, a road that was to be made difficult by the memory of old quarrels, by racial and religious differences, by misunderstandings and political dissensions. But years of co-operation in times of peace, and of comradeship in times of war, have transformed the ancient enemies into loyal fellow-countrymen; and now Canadians of both French and English stock are able to look back with a pride untouched by jealousy or resentment to the two opposed leaders who so valiantly fought and died in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

II

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE

ON JUNE 5, 1789, old Fort Chipewyan, situated on the south shore of the Lake of the Hills (now Lake Athabasca), in the heart of that vast desolate region which stretches from the Rocky Mountains to Hudson's Bay, was the scene of considerable bustle and excitement. The lonely inmates of this remote trading post, who usually had nothing better to do than smoke their pipes and whittle withes for showshoes, had been hurrying about in a decidedly purposeful manner since early morning and at nine o'clock four birch bark canoes shoved off from the rough landing-place under the fort and headed westward down the lake. The largest canoe held eight occupants—four French-Canadian *voyageurs*, two of whom were accompanied by their wives, a German, and a young fur-trader of the North-West Company named Alexander Mackenzie; the second was occupied by a stalwart Indian chief, the guide of the expedition, with his squaws; the third contained two sharp-eyed and sinewy native hunters; while the fourth, which was to go with the others only as far as Great Slave Lake, was full of general merchandise in charge of a clerk of the company called Leroux.

Two thousand miles away in the villages along the St. Lawrence, summer was in full swing; but as these hardy voyagers struck their paddles into the water, though the trees and shrubs were in leaf, the nip of winter was still keen in the air. Farewells were shouted; muskets were fired; and the little party settled down to the long, long journey that lay before them.

Alexander Mackenzie, the strong, bold, weather-tanned youth, so conspicuous in the largest canoe, was the leader of the expedition. A daring spirit, never content to remain idle, he showed all the enterprise and love of action so characteristic of his Scottish ancestors. Thirty-four years earlier he had been born in the little town of Stornoway in the Hebrides; but the scent of the sea must have set him dreaming of adventure, for at sixteen he had crossed the ocean and was in the counting-house of one of the fur-trading companies of Montreal. The firm in whose warehouses he had found employment was a small corporation that had been started in opposition to the North-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, who were the two big fur-trading companies of that day. For five years he counted furs and made neat figures in a ledger; but nature had cut him out for something more active than a clerkship, and at the end of that period he was ordered inland to Detroit, a lonely settlement in the midst of the forest.

In Detroit he spent about a year, learning the shrewd art of bartering powder and shot, blankets, beads and simple utensils for valuable peltries, after which he was given a share in the company and was sent

several hundred miles farther into the wilderness. The new task that was assigned to him was one that required astuteness and daring. At that time the rivalry between the various fur companies was intense and it was Mackenzie's duty to intercept the Indians on their way to the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Fort Churchill, and by flattery and gifts, to obtain from them the rich products of their hunting. This duty he performed with such success that he became known as one of the most enterprising young men in the business.

But his wanderings had not yet reached their end. The bitterness between the rival companies went from bad to worse until at last it led to bloodshed. A popular young trader of Mackenzie's company, whose post lay far to the west, was killed as the result of a long-standing feud between himself and a rival trader of the North-West Company. Saner heads decided that something must be done to put an end to the strife, and a union was effected between the company of which Mackenzie was a member and the North-West Company. Following this union Mackenzie was appointed to take over the duties of both the murdered man and of his murderer, and business once more went energetically forward.

With his headquarters thirty miles south of Lake Athabasca on the Elk (now the Athabasca) River, he settled down to the routine of fur-trading. But soon the monotony of the existence palled upon his restless spirit. He was young; his ambition ran high; the prospect of spending the best years of his life in haggling with the Indians became loathsome to him; and he longed

to do something more heroic. Rumours kept coming to his ears of a mighty river which drained Great Slave Lake—a body of water several days' journey north of Lake Athabasca—and flowed on into the mists of the Arctic. The fancy of the savages surrounded this stream with such stories of marvel and terror that Mackenzie's imagination was fascinated. Where did it empty? Would its course lead through lands whose riches in furs had not yet been touched? Would its mouth reveal that north-west passage around the continent, that waterway to the Orient, the search for which had baffled navigators for so many years? Pondering over these questions he at length determined to forsake the dullness of trade and solve for himself the mysteries of this great unknown river.

Certain difficulties, however, stood in his way. The recent trade rivalry had stirred up such feelings of unrest among the natives that it would have been unsafe to leave the affairs of the post in charge of any subordinate. It was doubtful, moreover, if the governor of the North-West Company would take kindly to a request for leave from this young man who had been until recently such an enterprising enemy of the company's interests. The first difficulty Mackenzie surmounted by calling upon his cousin, Roderick Mackenzie, also a fur trader, to come and take charge of the post; the second he disposed of by saying not a word about his intentions to any one except his most intimate friends. When his cousin arrived they decided to move their headquarters to a more advantageous spot on the shores of Lake Athabasca. Fort Chipewyan was built;

Roderick was initiated into the business of the company; and Alexander Mackenzie was enabled to put off on his daring voyage of exploration.

The four canoes proceeded to the western end of the lake and then struck northward into the river which flows from Lake Athabasca through several leagues of thickly-wooded country to Great Slave Lake. The winding course of this river was more or less familiar to the voyagers—Leroux and the Indians had been over it many times before—but it was not without its perils. The rapids and falls were particularly dangerous. One of the canoes, which at that time was being paddled by a squaw, was caught in the swirl of the current above a falls, and, although the woman was able to save herself by plunging into the water and swimming wildly for shore, the canoe itself and everything in it was lost. But otherwise they proceeded on their way without mishap. Some of the less tumultuous rapids they ran, but most of them they avoided by laboriously dragging the boats and baggage over rocks and fallen trees—a task that was doubly unpleasant on account of mosquitoes and "bull-dog" flies which followed them in clouds. Snow still lay in the more sheltered spots in the forest. Rain came on, and fogs, and a bitterly cold north wind; and when, after six days' travelling, they arrived at Great Slave Lake, they found it still a dreary sheet of unbroken ice.

It was several days before the wind and the rain had broken the ice sufficiently for them to proceed. But on the 15th the wind, which had been in the north, veered to the west and opened a navigable passage.

Seven days' hard paddling brought them to the north shore of the Lake. Here they fell in with some Indians of the Redknife tribe who provided them with a guide. But this guide, who professed precise knowledge of the region, was really of very little use. His information was exceedingly vague and inaccurate. The outlet for which they were seeking lay somewhere in the west—that was all he seemed to know. Day after day they searched for it, sometimes scudding through the waves of the open lake under a little patch of sail, sometimes paddling cautiously into deep bays that looked as if they might lead to an outlet. But finally, at five in the morning of June 29th, they rounded a point that revealed to them the object of their search—a broad shallow estuary, the feeding ground of hundreds of wild fowl, which gradually narrowed into the course of a river. Night found them encamped on the bank of this unknown waterway in territories which no white man had ever before visited.

Each day that followed was very much like every other day. By four or five in the morning while the mists still hung in the chilly air, their frail flotilla was afloat on that great river, now called after the leader of the expedition, which is as broad as a lake and as majestic as the sea. The constant dread of the party was lest the current of the great stream should imperceptibly quicken and, before they were aware of their danger, dash them headlong over the brink of some huge cataract; and often when the weather was thick their intent ears were deceived into believing that they caught the roar of rushing waters ahead. Day after day, as they

journeyed on, great mountains whose tops were lost in the clouds appeared and vanished. Frequently they came on the remains of former Indian encampments, but for a long time they encountered no human inhabitants.

On Sunday, July 5th, however, they descried blue-white columns of smoke rising from amongst the trees some distance farther down the river. A nearer approach showed them that the smoke came from the fires of an Indian encampment. But as they pressed eagerly forward they could see that their sudden appearance had caused a wild panic amongst the natives. Some of them were vanishing into the woods, while others were scrambling hastily into their canoes. Mackenzie's Indians shouted to them and made friendly advances; but it was only with the greatest difficulty that they were persuaded to return.

When their fears had been laid to rest by trinkets—they seemed to know nothing of the use of tobacco or grog—they answered questions put to them through an interpreter. Their answers were not encouraging. Mackenzie wrote in his diary:

"It will be sufficient just to mention their attempts to persuade us that it would require several winters to get to the sea, and that old age would come upon us before the period of our return; we were also to encounter monsters of such horrid shapes and destructive powers as could exist only in their wild imaginations. They added, besides, that there were two impassable falls in the river, the first of which was about thirty days' march from us."

But one of their number was induced, in consideration

of a kettle, an axe, a knife and a few other articles, to act as their guide.

From this point on the whole character of the region gradually altered. The trees decreased in size until they were little more than stunted shrubs; the banks became low and naked and were observed to be faced with ledges of ice; and the land itself was covered with short, coarse grass and flowers—some of these quite pretty—despite the fact that snow and ice lay in the hollows. On a certain night Mackenzie sat up to make observations. At half-past twelve he called one of his men to view a spectacle he had never before seen—the midnight sun. But the fellow, perceiving the sun high above the horizon, aroused several of his companions, and Mackenzie could scarcely persuade them that it was not time to embark. As they proceeded on their way they discovered, much to their relief, that the promised falls were nothing more dreadful than accelerations in the current so slight as to be almost imperceptible. The course of the river, however, was shortly broken into a maze of channels by many low sandy islands. Traces of the Esquimaux were noticed, —burnt-out ashes of previous fires, footprints, huts, whalebones—but no human creature could be found. One evening after they had lain down to rest, the water rose so high that it became necessary for some of the party to get up and move their belongings farther back. At the time they thought little of this strange action of the water—attributed it in fact to the force of the wind. But next day they caught sight of a school of

whales disporting themselves in the waves, and they knew that they had reached the ocean.

So great was their exultation that they immediately clambered into one of the canoes and gave chase! What would have happened if they had come up with the huge monsters in their frail canoes can easily be imagined; but luckily for them a fog soon hid their quarry from sight and forced them to return to shore. The island upon which they landed after this rash escapade was named Whale Island; and Mackenzie erected on it a post on which he inscribed the date and all the details of the expedition.

The return journey was toilsome but uneventful, and, contrary to all expectations, the party was safely back at Fort Chipewyan before winter set in. The following spring Mackenzie went down to Grand Portage on Lake Superior, the assembly point for western fur-traders, where he made known the story of his explorations. But the other fur-traders were too much intent on their own business to pay much heed, and the heads of his own company seemed to think that he would have been better employed in attending to his trading. This lack of enthusiasm, however, did not greatly disappoint him. His cousin had already prepared him for it, and in his own mind plans were forming for a more notable expedition.

On his way back from the Arctic he had questioned all the natives with whom he had come in contact about the country that lay beyond the mountains. In their big imaginative way they had told him of another great river which flowed through that region and

emptied into the sea. Fired with zeal for exploration, he had set his heart on floating down this river to the Pacific ocean. His Arctic voyage had convinced him, however, that for the making of accurate observations he would require greater mathematical and astronomical knowledge. To make good this deficiency he journeyed to England, where for a year he diligently applied himself to a study of the sciences.

When he returned to Fort Chipewyan, fully equipped with instruments and knowledge, he lost no time in starting on his second voyage of discovery. The early spring of 1793 found him far up the Peace River headed for the mountains. On this expedition his whole party (there were ten in all), together with 3,000 pounds of baggage, was embarked in a single large canoe built especially for the purpose.

The conditions of travel were vastly different from those of his earlier journey. Instead of floating down the broad bosom of a smoothly-flowing river, he was this time laboriously forcing his way, by alternate towing and poling, up a brawling, turbulent stream whose current at best was too strong to be stemmed by paddling and at worst was a turmoil of rushing waters boiling and bubbling and dashing itself into spray against the rocks. The surrounding country was now as striking and picturesque, as entrancing in its massive loveliness, as the previous region had been dreary and desolate. Great mountains capped with snow towered into the clouds; abrupt precipices were interspersed with gently ascending lawns; willows and spruce trees and birches overhung the water and stood in inviting groves on the

hillsides; and the whole scene, as he naively puts it, was "enlivened with vast herds of elk and buffaloes."

The hardships and perils of this second journey would furnish material for a thrilling serial in the movies. Towing their canoe through the more tumultuous rapids, poling it carefully up the smoother reaches, carrying it with infinite labour around some impassable cascade, they slowly ascended the mountain defile. Sometimes the banks of the rivers were low and accessible, but more often they were sheer walls of rock several hundred feet in height. One of the voyagers' chief dangers was from falling boulders. Without warning huge stones, dislodged from some ledge far above, would come hurtling down the mountainside. Several members of the party escaped being crushed to death only by the narrowest margin, and the canoe itself was frequently in peril.

At one point the travellers came to a foaming rapid that scouts reported to be fully nine leagues in length. To push on through the turmoil of waters was out of the question. No alternative was offered but to portage all their goods and the huge canoe over a steep and thickly wooded mountain ridge. Nothing daunted, they set about the almost impossible task. A rough path was cleared through the forest by felling trees; a strong line was tied to the bow of the canoe and one man would hitch this around a tree trunk or a stump and hang on, while the others would hoist and pry and pull the heavy boat foot by foot up the steep incline. For three days they chopped and hauled and sweated, and it was with deep feelings of relief

that they at last launched their craft on the comparatively smooth waters above the rapids.

From the general appearance of the surrounding country at this stage, Mackenzie began to suspect that they were approaching the head of the Peace River, and he watched the bank anxiously, but in vain, for some indications of a carrying-place that might lead to another navigable waterway. One day, however, while he and his men were paddling steadily up the river they caught the scent of burning wood in the air, and a few minutes later heard a confused sound of human voices excitedly talking in the forest ahead. Not wishing to encounter an unknown number of natives who might prove hostile, Mackenzie ordered his men to make for the opposite shore; but scarcely had the bow of the canoe been turned towards land when two Indians appeared on a knoll directly ahead, and brandishing their spears and displaying their bows and arrows, shouted and gesticulated in a very threatening manner. Mackenzie's interpreter entered into parley with them; but it was not until he had thoroughly satisfied them of the friendliness of the white man's intentions, that they permitted them to land.

It turned out that the party of Indians to whom these bold warriors belonged consisted of only three men, three women and seven or eight children. At the sight of the great canoe full of strangers coming up the river, they had been thrown into a state of considerable alarm, and the women and children, accompanied by one of the men, had been sent into the woods to hide. So great had been the consternation of the refugees that

they had not waited even to put on their leggings and shoes, and when they were induced to return they were found to be in a sad condition with scratched legs and bleeding feet. Gifts of trinkets and food, however, convinced them that the white men meant no harm, and the two parties encamped together peacefully for the night.

When Mackenzie judged that his friends had somewhat recovered from their fright, he invited the men of the party to his tent, and questioned them closely as to whether or not there was a big river flowing from the mountains to the sea. They told him that other tribes farther to the west sometimes travelled to the sea (or as they called it, the Stinking Lake) but they declared that they knew of no river that flowed in that direction. Again and again he put the question, but always in vain. Either they did not know of any waterway to the coast, or else they were unwilling to share their information with a stranger. When they departed for the night, they left him in a state of deep perplexity. What should he and his voyagers do next? To strike across the mountains on foot, with all their goods on their backs, would be impossible; and to keep on paddling up stream in an attempt to discover a water route that even the Indians did not know of would be even more hopeless. For long hours he lay awake puzzling over the difficult problem, and in the morning he once more questioned the Indians.

At first his efforts brought no greater success than the night before; but about nine o'clock, as they all sat around the camp-fire, his sharp ear caught the Indian

word for a big river, and he saw one of his new friends point significantly up the stream whose course they had been following. When Mackenzie eagerly asked about this big river, he was told that a branch of it could be reached by travelling on through the mountains, but that it flowed toward the mid-day sun and did not empty into the sea. Believing, despite what the Indians said, that this must be the stream he was looking for, he gave one of them a strip of bark and a piece of charcoal, and had him draw a map of the intervening country.

So exact was this rough sketch that Mackenzie knew for a certainty that he was not being deceived. Without delay, therefore, he gave orders to pack, and by ten o'clock, with one of the friendly Indians acting as guide, he was once more on his way. For some distance they proceeded up stream, then portaged to a small lake that nestled tranquilly amongst the hills, and from it portaged to a second lake, which brought him to the topmost ridge of the vast watershed. Two streams, soft and white as lace, tumbled down the rocks into the body of water they had just left, while two others fell into a third lake, which they were just about to enter. From this latter lake they pushed their way into a narrow stream, much obstructed with sand bars and fallen trees and began their descent of the western slope of the great mountain range.

If their progress up the Peace River had been hazardous, their descent of this new stream was fraught with even greater danger. Not knowing what whirlpool or cataract might lie in wait beyond the next bend, they plunged headlong down with the current. Even the

Indian guides were terrified. Something of the dangers they encountered every day is suggested by the following abridged extract from Mackenzie's diary:

"We accordingly pushed off, and had proceeded but a very short way when the canoe struck, and the violence of the current was so great as to drive her sideways down the river, and break her by the first bar, when I instantly jumped into the water and the rest followed my example; but before we could set her straight or stop her, we came to deeper water, so that we were obliged to re-embark with the utmost precipitation. We had scarcely regained our situations when we drove against a rock which shattered the stern of the canoe. The violence of this stroke drove us to the opposite side of the river, when the bow met the same fate as the stern. At this moment the foreman seized on some branches of a small tree in the hope of bringing up the canoe, but he was jerked on shore in an instant, and with a degree of violence that threatened his destruction. But we had no time to enquire what had befallen him; for in a few moments we came across a cascade which broke several large holes in the bottom of the canoe. The wreck becoming flat on the water, we all jumped out. In this condition [clinging to the wreck] we were forced several hundred yards, and every yard on the verge of destruction; but at length we most fortunately arrived in shallow water, and a small eddy, where we were enabled to make a stand, from the weight of the canoe resting on the stones, rather than from any exertions of our exhausted strength."

In this predicament Mackenzie showed real genius for leadership. The situation seemed utterly hopeless: everything the party owned was soaked through and through, their bullets had been lost in the stream,

their canoe was almost a complete wreck, they themselves were aching from the cold of the water. The Indians who had been following along the bank, when they arrived on the scene and saw the desperate state of their companions, instead of trying to help, "sat down and gave vent to their tears." And both Indians and white men were loud in their declarations that nothing remained but to turn back. Mackenzie listened to them patiently; raised no objections; appeared in fact to agree with all they said until, with their clothes dry and their hearts cheered by an extra hearty meal and an extra large measure of rum, they assembled round the camp-fire. Then he addresssed them. After a few inspiriting words about the honour that would be theirs if they succeeded in overcoming such great difficulties, he went on to point out how new bullets could be manufactured from smaller shot, how the canoe could be repaired with birch bark and gum—how, indeed, with a little work, everything could be put in condition for a renewal of the voyage. When he finished speaking his men all declared with enthusiasm that they were ready to follow wherever he would lead.

Next day accordingly they continued their journey, and after weeks of toil and privation, after weeks of almost unbelievable adventure, they finally came out on the shore of the Pacific Ocean. Most of the Indians along the way had proved to be very friendly and hospitable; but those who lived on the coast were quite different. Not in the least afraid of strangers, they showed themselves exceedingly aggressive and insolent, examining everything the white men owned, stealing whatever

they could lay their hands on, and even threatening violence. One particularly impudent rogue, who shoved himself into Mackenzie's canoe, declared that he had been shot at only a few days before by a white man called *Macubah*, who had come there in a big canoe, and that another of the white men called *Bensins* had beaten him with the flat of his sword. Mackenzie wrote feelingly in his journal that he did "not doubt but he well deserved the treatment which he described;" but he himself could not continue the lesson in manners for fear of offending the fellow's tribe. Mackenzie, indeed, for the first time admitted that he was alarmed. He warned his followers to be constantly on their guard, and he remained in the neighbourhood no longer than was necessary. Before starting on his return journey, however, he took accurate observations of his position and painted on a rock the inscription:

> "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land,
> the twenty-second of July, one thousand,
> seven hundred and ninety-three."

It may be noted in passing that the impudent Indian's story of being mistreated by white men was probably quite true. At the very time when Mackenzie was writing his inscription on the rock, another great explorer, whose name was not *Macubah* as the rogue pronounced it, but Vancouver, was anchored a few miles up the coast. It is unfortunate that these two daring voyagers could not have met in this remote corner of the world to which they had come, the one by

land and the other by sea, and have exchanged experiences. Mackenzie would have been particularly happy at such a meeting for his supplies were almost exhausted, and the unfriendly natives of the coast would sell food only at the most exorbitant prices.

The return journey was a race with winter, but the explorers were once more back at their headquarters before the waterways were frozen and the mountain defiles rendered impassable by the snows and frosts of winter.

The succeeding years of Mackenzie's life, though prosperous and notable, can be covered in a few words. The winter following his trip to the Pacific he spent at Fort Chipewyan writing his journal; and in the spring he left the North-west country for good. Not long afterwards he began a lasting friendship with royalty by acting as travelling companion to the Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father, while that nobleman was stationed in Canada, and in 1801 a book telling the story of his two famous voyages was published in London under the title, "Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans."

This book, a heavy volume with maps and a portrait of the author, has an interesting story of its own. Two episodes in connection with it are worth mentioning. At the time of its publication Napoleon was at the height of his power, and, eager to distract England's attention from the continent, he conceived the idea of striking at her through her colonies. This idea was to be carried out in a very daring manner. A French

army was to be landed at New Orleans, and, by proceeding up the Mississippi, was to pour into Canada from the south. Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's favourite marshals, was assigned to the task of organizing this amazing expedition, and was instructed to read everything he could get on the geography of North America. Mackenzie's volume, which was being much talked of, was obtained from smugglers, was translated into French, and was studied with the closest attention by both Bernadotte and the Emperor. The wild scheme of invading Canada was soon forgotten in the turmoil of the Russian campaign; but years afterwards Bernadotte, who had meanwhile become King of Sweden, could still recall the interest with which he had perused and re-perused this fascinating book of travels. The second episode was, perhaps, less romantic, but was rather more productive of results. The Earl of Selkirk read the volume and was inspired by it to start his famous settlement on the banks of the Red River, which has since grown into the city of Winnipeg.

Mackenzie himself became a well-known man in the fur trade, was knighted, was married, and ultimately settled down upon an estate in Scotland where he occupied himself with the unexciting duties of a gentleman farmer. His death occurred in 1820 very suddenly while he was returning from a visit to London.

III

SIR ISAAC BROCK

A STORY is told of the meeting of Brock with Tecumseh that clearly reveals the sort of man Brock was. The meeting took place at a war council on the banks of the Detroit River. At the conclusion of a brief speech to his dusky allies Brock said: "I have fought against the enemies of our great father, the King, beyond the great lake, and they have never seen my back. I am come here to fight his enemies on this side the great lake, and now desire with my soldiers to take lessons from you and your warriors, that we may learn how to make war in these great forests." The Indian chief, after regarding for a moment in silence the stalwart red-coated Britisher, with his curly fair hair, his frank blue eyes and his soldierly bearing, turned to his painted followers and said in the language of his people, "Ho-o-e-e! This is a man!"

The keen eye of the savage, accustomed to look for strength and courage in a warrior's mien, had found the dominant note of Brock's character. It was Brock's open candour, his unflinching directness, his bravery, his unstinted devotion to duty—in short, his manliness, that won for him his specially honoured niche in

Canada's Hall of Fame. Even the portrait painters of his day, whose conventional brushes gave all their subjects cupid's bow lips, delicately curved nostrils and just that amount of jocular hauteur which would mark them as gentlemen, could not hide Brock's virile honesty. There was a certain strong breadth to the cheek-bones and a certain intrepid yet kindly glance in the eye that could not be concealed. In his old-fashioned choker collar and his heavily-braided coat he stands forth as representative of the finest traditions of the British army.

Isaac Brock was born, the ninth child in a family of fourteen, in a small fishing and shipping village on the island of Guernsey. The year of his birth, 1769, was the same year in which both Wellington and Napoleon were born. Blue-eyed, tousle-haired, and muscular, he was a real boy, always ready for any sport or adventure. When he was only ten years of age he made a name for himself amongst his fellows by swimming through the ocean waves half a mile out to a reef and back again without stopping. His education, begun in the local school, was continued at a boarding-school in Southampton, and was completed in the home of a Protestant clergyman in Belgium, where he was sent to learn French. At the early age of fifteen he entered the army and saw active service in Holland, in 1799, and on board Nelson's fleet, as one of the soldiers supporting the marines, in the bloody battle off Copenhagen.

The year after the battle of Copenhagen, Brock, already a colonel, was ordered with his regiment to Canada. The prospect of spending several years in the

colonies thoroughly disgusted him. Europe, stirred into a turmoil by Napoleon, was one great battlefield, where an ambitious young officer might hope for rapid advancement; whereas the Canadas, far-away and almost unknown, offered nothing more stirring than a dreary round of drills and parades in some backwoods settlement.

But Brock did not let his private feelings interfere with the performance of his duty. He did not like the task to which he was assigned, but he had a good old-fashioned conscience which impelled him to do even disagreeable work with all his might. Whether on board one of Nelson's frigates in the crash and glory of battle, or buried from the eyes of the world in some outpost of civilization, he was always staunch and zealous in the service of his king. Fighting came to him at last—and plenty of it. But in estimating his value to Canada we must not let his pre-eminent services on the fields of battle overshadow the less spectacular, but equally valuable, and in some respects equally heroic, services he rendered before the outbreak of the American War.

He came to Canada in the spring of 1802. His regiment, the 49th, was told off for garrison duty in the upper province, part being stationed at Fort George near the mouth of the Niagara River, and part at Little York, now Toronto. In this latter village Brock established his headquarters. In his day York was a lonely settlement of not more than five hundred souls. Between two crude blockhouses its cabins, many of them of logs, were scattered amid a grove of oak trees along the

shore of that sheltered bay upon which Toronto now stands. All about lay the impenetrable forest, through which three roads had been laboriously cut, one around to the head of the lake, the second back north to Lake Simcoe, and the third eastward along the shore to Kingston.

One of Brock's first duties was the very unpleasant one of stamping out disaffection amongst his own troops. He himself mingled kindness with his stern insistence on discipline, but lesser officers were sometimes given to over-severity and even bullying. The men for their part had little to do but brood over their grievances; the American border was close; and desertions were not uncommon.

One night shortly after Brock arrived in York he was aroused from his sleep by the sergeant-major, who informed him that three of his men and a boat that had been kept in a shed on the lakeshore were missing. Jumping hastily out of bed, Brock ordered that another boat be immediately manned and that the regiment be assembled in the barrack-room. When the roll was called it was discovered that three other men and a corporal of the 41st, who was stationed there on special duty, were also missing. Throwing aside his dignity as commanding officer, Brock himself set out in pursuit. With a dozen or so men he struck out across Lake Ontario in an open flat-bottomed boat. By morning he and his party had reached the Niagara River, and after searching for some time along the American shore they found the deserters and brought them back to York.

Not long after this episode word came of more serious disaffection amongst the men of his regiment who were on garrison duty at Fort George. Several of these men, weary of the tedium of their existence and resentful of the severe discipline imposed upon them, were conspiring to murder their commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Sheaffe, and escape across the river to the United States. On receiving the news Brock sailed immediately for the scene of the impending trouble, landed on the beach a short distance below the fort, and walked alone and unannounced to the gate. It happened that the sergeant of the guard was one of the ringleaders in the conspiracy. Brock sternly ordered him to advance and lay down his arms, and instructed the corporal of the guard to handcuff the fellow and lock him up in one of the cells. This done, the corporal, himself one of the conspirators, was also arrested; and within a few minutes every one of those suspected was safely under lock and key. The trial of the culprits took place some time later at Quebec. Four of the worst offenders were condemned to be shot, along with three of those who had deserted from the garrison at York. As a testimony to Brock's popularity amongst the troops, it may be said that the poor fellows before their death publicly announced that had Brock been in command at Fort George they would never have joined in such a conspiracy.

The same vigour and directness of action that Brock displayed in quelling these incipient mutinies was shown throughout his military administration. Frequently his headquarters were moved. Sometimes

he was at Quebec, erecting batteries, fortifications, military hospitals; sometimes he was at Montreal, looking after the welfare of his men and overseeing the raising of militia regiments; and sometimes he was at York or Fort George. Always there lurked in his mind the fear of invasion from across the southern border, with perhaps some of Napoleon's veterans assisting the untrained American militia, and his efforts were constantly directed towards making Canada to some degree at least defensible.

Meanwhile he tried to make his banishment from Europe endurable by engaging in such amusements as colonial society provided. Writing to his sister-in-law from Quebec, he said:

"We have been uncommonly gay the last fortnight: two frigates at anchor, and the arrival of Governor Gore from the upper province, have given a zest to society. Races, country and water parties, have occupied our time in a continued round of festivities. Such stimulus is highly necessary to keep our spirits afloat. I contributed my share to the general mirth in a grand dinner given to Mrs. Gore, at which Sir J. Craig was present, and a ball to a vast assemblage of all descriptions." But his gaieties never for a moment made him forget his military responsibilities.

Despite all his efforts, however, when Congress, urged into ill-judged action by the popular hatred of England and the inflammatory words of hot-headed orators, finally issued its declaration of war, Canada found herself in a most unenviable position. Beyond doubt she would have to bear the brunt of any American

attacks; yet with her sparse and scattered population (her enemy outnumbered her twenty to one), her hundreds of miles of almost unprotected borders, and her miserable roads and exposed waterways, she was in poor condition for defence. American opinion of her military prowess might be summed up in the words of one American fire-eater who declared that "in four weeks from the time of the declaration of war the whole of Upper and part of Lower Canada will be in the possession of the United States."

There can be no true understanding of Brock's achievement without at least some knowledge of the tremendous difficulties he was called upon to face. He had under his command, to meet an enemy who could enlist half a million men, only about 1,500 regular troops, with perhaps twice that number of dependable militia. Supplies and arms were wanting—some of the militiamen, in fact, did not receive muskets until Brock had captured a supply from the enemy. The mother country, herself straining every nerve to keep her armies in the Peninsula supplied and reinforced, was unable to come to his assistance. And in many sections of Upper Canada where American immigration had been large, there was either complete indifference to the outcome of the struggle or open sympathy with the enemy.

It was this last weakness in his position that gave Brock most uneasiness. On receiving news of the declaration of war he made a hurried tour of the Niagara frontier, and then as acting governor called an emergency session of the Assembly at York. He desired the rapid passing of stern measures to meet the crisis, but the

House, honeycombed with American sympathizers, and led by a man who later joined the American army, temporized and adopted half measures. Valuable time was slipping away, and Brock fretted for action. Calling out the militia of York he made a speech to them at the end of which he asked all of those who were willing to follow him against the enemy to take one step forward. With squared shoulders and blazing eyes every man (there were 400) rose to the occasion. Canada might be weakened by disaffection, but the hearts of true Canadians were sound.

It is interesting to contrast the attitude of Brock at this time with that of Sir George Prevost, the Governor. Prevost, more of the diplomat than of the soldier, was aware that a large part of the American Republic was either lukewarm in its enmity or openly averse to war, and he was constantly advising his subordinates to follow a policy of non-aggression. On no account were they to do anything to arouse the war spirit in the friendly sections of the Republic. But Brock was all for action. He was the soldier through and through. As soon as news came to him of the declaration of war he despatched a message to Captain Roberts, who was stationed with a small band of regular troops and fur-traders in a remote fort north of Lake Huron, instructing him to act with vigour. Roberts had previously received orders from Prevost to remain on the defensive and if necessary to retire, but Brock's instructions were more to his liking. With his motley band of followers he struck out across the lake to the American fort on Mackinac Island and captured it without a struggle.

The surprising suddenness of this stroke acted like a tonic on the spirits of all Canadians. Those who had before been filled with loyalty were now inspired with martial ardour; those who had previously been weak and timid now began to feel that their cause was not altogether hopeless. But best of all, perhaps, at least from the military standpoint, was the fact that the Indians were induced by this initial success to throw in their lot wholeheartedly with the British.

Brock himself, when his turn came, was equally aggressive. After spending a short time organizing the defences on the Niagara frontier and at York, he set out with reinforcements for Detroit, where matters looked none too bright. He and his little body of troops —he took with him about sixty regulars and maybe two hundred militiamen—sailed across Lake Ontario to Niagara and from there marched overland to the north shore of Lake Erie. At Long Point they embarked in small open boats and rowed to the farther end of the lake. A boisterous west wind fought them most of the way, whipping the shallow lake into ugly breakers, and driving the spray cast up from the blunt bows of the boats like a cold douche against the hot backs of the rowers. But at last, after travelling the greater part of the way under cover of darkness, they arrived at their destination.

At Amherstburg Brock found matters at a standstill. General Hull, after vainly attempting to invade the trackless reaches of dark forest that at that time covered all southern Ontario, had sullenly retired within the fortifications of Detroit; and the Canadian militiamen

and the Indians, strengthened by a few regulars, were doing him what damage they could by bombarding his barracks, ambuscading his columns of supply, and worrying his outposts. But Brock, after holding a brief council of war, immediately decided on a most daring adventure.

His first move was to demand the surrender of the fort. In a most adroitly worded communication he stated that "the forces at his disposal" authorized him to require the immediate surrender of Detroit. "It is far from my inclination," he went on to say, "to join in a war of extermination, but you must be aware that the numerous body of Indians, who have attached themselves to my troops, will be beyond my control the moment the contest commences." When the demand was refused, as he knew it would be, he prepared for assault.

On the morning of August 16th, just as the soft summer sun was rising above the eastern forest, his little army crossed the river. Numerous canoes, filled with half-naked Indians shouting defiance at their foes, hurried back and forth amongst the slower-moving boats that conveyed the red-coated British regulars and the sturdy militiamen. Half a mile higher up the river two small warships lay at anchor, with their flags drooping limply in the motionless air and their guns silently threatening the American shore; while beyond these ships could be seen the vicious flashes of the British artillery bombarding the fort and of the American guns replying. The dull boom of the cannon mingling with the shrill war-cries of the savages had an ominous sound in the general stillness of nature.

When they arrived on the other bank, a muster was called, and the little force, numbering scarcely more than 700 men, was drawn up in a column of sections at double intervals to make as formidable a showing as possible. This done, the march began along the road to the fort. Every man knew the boldness of the enterprise, yet every man was eager for the assault. As they came within sight of the wooden roofs and stockades that constituted the fort, they saw planted in the road ahead two long heavy cannon. The threatening muzzles pointed directly at the head of their column, and the gunners stood by with lighted matches waiting only for the command to fire. Several houses and a continuous line of rail fence on the left, and the river on the right, made it impossible to deploy. At any moment a storm of screaming grape-shot might tear their ranks to shreds. Heads went up; faces became set; but no man faltered in his step. With death staring them in the face, they marched to within three quarters of a mile of the fort, when General Brock spoke a crisp word of command, and the column wheeled to the left through an open field and an orchard to a farmhouse that was sheltered from the fort's guns by a slight rise in the ground.

Then an amazing thing happened. General Brock had advanced to the top of the knoll to reconnoitre when he was informed that an emissary of the enemy was approaching with a white flag. He sent two aides off immediately to find out what was wanted, and in a few minutes one of them came galloping back with word that General Hull wished to discuss terms of capitulation.

The perfect confidence of the British advance, its very boldness, had shaken the American general's courage and, much to the disgust of his braver subordinates, he surrendered Detroit without even an attempt at defence.

After attending to the necessary details of occupation, Brock hastened back to Niagara, his brain filled with further plans of attack. But the trading schooner upon which he had taken passage was met on its voyage down Lake Erie by a small gunboat, whose chief officer informed him that an armistice had been signed between Sir George Prevost and the American commander, General Dearborn. At this news Brock was sadly disappointed. "Should peace follow," he wrote to his brothers, "the measure will be well; if hostilities recommence, nothing could be more unfortunate than this pause." The Americans were dispirited at the loss of Detroit, whereas the Canadian militia and the Indians were inspired with confidence by their initial victory and were eager for a second brush with the enemy. Brock's fighting instinct told him that the sooner he struck another blow the greater would be his chances of success. He had planned to attack Fort Niagara, and then, after crossing Lake Ontario from Kingston, to storm the American naval base at Sackett's Harbour; but the armistice and a direct order from Sir George Prevost enjoining him to avoid such aggressive action left him nothing to do but to review and organize his forces.

With this purpose in mind he went on to Kingston; but two hours after he landed there he learned that the

armistice was at an end. If his tactics were to be defensive, the Niagara frontier, he realized, must be his key position. He therefore returned immediately to Fort George, where he waited for some aggressive movement from the enemy. In a letter to the Governor he wrote: "I shall refrain as long as possible, under your excellency's positive injunctions, from every hostile act, although sensible that each day's delay gives him an advantage."

On the morning of October 13th, General Brock, who had risen early, heard cannonading in the direction of Queenston. Surmising that serious events were happening, he called for his horse, and without waiting for his aides, galloped off along the Queenston Road. As he approached the scene of battle the firing became louder and louder until the crackle of musketry could be distinctly heard above the dull boom of the artillery. He was pondering over how best to meet the danger, when there suddenly appeared from out of the morning mist a young officer on horseback. So hard was the fellow riding that he was carried several yards past his chief before he could bring his horse to a standstill. But Brock, without slackening speed, beckoned him to follow; and presently the two were galloping side by side. The Americans, so this messenger declared, supported by the concentrated fire of several batteries, had crossed the river at Queenston, and were fast consolidating their position on the Canadian shore. Brock had guessed as much; and on learning that his fears were justified, he sent this despatch rider back to Fort George to

instruct General Sheaffe, who had been left in command, to hurry up with the whole of the reserve.

When General Brock dashed in amongst his soldiers at Queenston, he found them in a state of confusion, almost of despair. All attempts to dislodge the enemy from the Canadian shore had failed, and the situation was becoming more and more dangerous. Boats were continually plying across the river, bringing up reinforcements for the enemy. Not a minute was to be lost. In order to see more clearly what was happening Brock ascended that height of land which overlooks the river and the town. But while he was observing the scene of battle from this point of vantage he became aware of a disturbance in the bushes overhanging the ravine, and turning, perceived that the enemy had scrambled up the cliff and were appearing in overwhelming numbers not thirty yards away. Only the most precipitate flight saved him and the officers with him from instant death; but on reaching the town below, he hastily collected the few men that were available and himself led them against this new danger. It was while he was cheering his followers up the steep hillside that a musket ball pierced his heart and he fell mortally wounded.

The heroism of Brock's death has often been extolled, but its pathos has rarely been dwelt on. Brock died in a moment of defeat. Disheartened by the loss of their leader and hopelessly outnumbered by the enemy, his followers, immediately after his fall, retreated some distance down the river. Their general's body they

left in a house in Queenston, hastily concealed under a pile of old blankets. In his dying moments Brock could not have foreseen the renewed courage that was to sweep his little army back to victory; neither could he understand the full significance of his own deeds. Scarcely a month before his death he had written to his brother: "I am quite anxious for this state of warfare to end, as I wish much to join Lord Wellington, and to see you all." Throughout his whole sojourn in Canada he had regarded himself as banished from the scene of epoch-making events. It was beyond his powers to realize that an importance was to attach to his skirmishes (for in comparison with the greater battles of the Napoleonic wars they were little more) that was to be denied to many larger victories. Could he have known that in future years he was to be looked on as the saviour of one of the fairest sections of the British Empire, his end would have seemed less tragic. But it was, perhaps, the very pathos of his death, its apparent futility, its failure to achieve that dramatic fitness which marked the death of Wolfe, that has endeared him to our hearts, and has made his figure captivate our imaginations as few historic characters have ever done.

IV

THOMAS CHANDLER HALIBURTON

THE SMALL boy who could not tell whether his dog was a little black dog with white spots or a little white dog with black spots is in much the same quandary as the person who sets out to write a sketch of Thomas Chandler Haliburton. It is hard to decide whether Haliburton should be treated as a distinguished judge with a gift for pleasant satire, or a notable humourist with a curious turn for politics and the Bench.

In the eyes of his fellow Nova Scotians, at least in his earlier days, it was his magisterial aspect which loomed the larger. There is something about the dignity of a judge that strikes the contemporary eye as tangible and imposing; whereas an author, especially one somewhat given to poking fun at his local public, is always an enigma. Haliburton's readers in the Maritime Provinces, despite their enthusiastic reception of his humourous sketches, were never quite sure how to take him—whether to laugh unreservedly at his gibes, or to feel hurt because they had struck so near home. In the end, as was only natural, they disposed of him as we of a later generation have attempted to

dispose of Bernard Shaw: they permitted themselves to chuckle over his quips and perversities but refused to take him seriously. In looking on him as a magistrate of talent, whose lighter works were the condescending pleasantries of a great man, they no doubt felt themselves on safe ground. The Haliburtons were old settlers in the province and had legal traditions. The author's father had also been a judge.

The story of Thomas Chandler Haliburton's early life and ancestry is conveniently suggested by one of his favourite pleasantries. He was fond of puzzling a circle of new acquaintances at the Lieutenant-Governor's levée or around the open fire after a hunt, with the announcement that he and his father had been born in the same house, but twenty miles apart. An account of this apparently extensive mansion takes us back to the pioneer days of the Haliburton family.

The author's grandfather came from Massachusetts when the lands made vacant by the expulsion of the French Acadians were offered for settlement to English immigrants. On his arrival in Acadia he received from the government a considerable grant of land at the head-waters of a small stream which empties into the Avon. Here he built a plain, serviceable house, staunch of timber and heavily planked, within whose walls were born to him several children, amongst them William Henry Otis Haliburton, the author's father. When in the fullness of time William Haliburton had succeeded to the family estate and had begun to rise in the world, he considered it wise to remove from this beautiful but remote locality to some more populated

neighbourhood. Instead of deserting his inherited dwelling, however, he simply floated it, like an unwieldy Noah's Ark, down the river, past the amused gaze of settlers along the way, until it reached the elm-shaded village which was later to develop into the town of Windsor. Here he hauled it out and in this same house on the 17th of November, 1796, was born his only child, the future author of "Sam Slick."

The town of Windsor, beautifully situated on the Avon River, a few miles from where it empties into the Minas Basin, can claim the whole credit for the education of Thomas Chandler Haliburton. In his childhood he played about its quiet streets, and as he grew up he duly attended its grammar school and its university of King's College. The conservative atmosphere of the little town coloured his whole outlook on life. Windsor was as peaceful as Sleepy Hollow—its only excitement was some new development in the gypsum trade, an occasional visit from some coasting schooner that slipped up the river at high tide, or the arrival of the muddy Halifax coach with its six steaming horses—but nevertheless it was, like Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford," a nest of social distinctions. A bit of old-fashioned England transplanted to the new and undeveloped shores of Nova Scotia, it contained an exclusive "society" in its professional, governing and military families, a middle class in its well-to-do shopkeepers, and a lower class in its vulgar artisans and tillers of the soil. And although King's College had but recently come to Nova Scotia, its walls exhaled an odour of antiquity, and its outlook was more conservative than that of Oxford itself. When

Haliburton graduated from its halls in 1815 he was a staunch Anglican and a thorough-going, though broad-minded and genial, Conservative.

Between the date of his graduation and 1820, when he was called to the Bar, he managed to accomplish several things: he studied law, visited England, was married to his first wife (he later married again), and learned to love the comforts and the luxuries of life.

It was at Annapolis that he first practised law. In this enterprising town his abilities quickly won him a large clientele and a seat in the provincial House of Assembly. But as a public man he was only a moderate success. His speeches, though suave and dignified (Joseph Howe, who often reported him in the *Nova Scotian*, described him as a "polished and effective speaker") did not show that crude power and bubbling humour which made Howe's own speeches so irresistible. He lacked, besides, in his public dealings that adroitness which makes a politician successful, and that unswerving constancy of purpose which makes him great. His surest title to respect as a statesman lies in the fact that he did much to bring about the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities. And he gave further evidence of his open-mindedness by taking up the cause of the Presbyterian Academy at Pictou. Year after year he persuaded the house to vote a grant to the Academy, but just as persistently the Council, composed of unyielding bigots of the "Family Compact" school, rejected the measure. At last, completely losing patience, he taunted his opponents with being twelve "dignified,

deep-read, pensioned old ladies, but filled with prejudices and whims like all other antiquated spinsters." This was too much. All "antiquated spinsters," male and female, have their sensibilities. The Council demanded an immediate apology, and the Assembly, not without considerable objection, was at length forced to comply. It passed a perfunctory vote of censure on its too-candid member; and Haliburton, much to the disgust of the Pictou Highlanders, accepting the rebuff, dropped forthwith his attempt to assist their struggling academy. A little later he succeeded his father, who had meanwhile died, as Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas of the Middle Division; and when this office was discontinued in 1841 he became a Judge of the Supreme Court.

Soon after his retirement from the Legislature to the Bench, he published his first important work, "An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia." This book gained for him £500 and a vote of thanks from the Assembly which had so lately censured him. Its publisher, his friend, Joseph Howe, with characteristic enthusiasm, brought out too large and costly an edition and lost heavily on the investment; but for years the work was regarded as the best authority on the history of Nova Scotia. Longfellow used it extensively in his researches on the expulsion of the Acadians, and every lover of Nova Scotia had it upon his shelves. But the student of to-day should thumb its yellow pages with an eye alert to catch inaccuracies. Despite its matter-of-fact title, its author displayed in its composition the instincts of the romancer rather than of

the historian. History to him was the story of picturesque and stirring events, the account of scenes and people so remote as to have gained the flavour of antiquity. Nowadays when history has become a scientific analysis of social and constitutional development, involving exhaustive researches through original sources, his work lies undisturbed on a dusty shelf in some obscure corner of the library; but in its day it gave his fellow-countrymen a new sense of their historical importance, and a new pride in the brave deeds of their forefathers.

Learned judge, romantic historian, fair-minded statesman, these were the parts played by the serious Haliburton. In appearance he was distinguished and scholarly, with something of the magistrate's legal dignity—one had almost said hauteur—in his mien and in the cut of his well-formed nose and chin. Yet the air of conscious gentility that characterized his expression was counterbalanced by evidences of humour —an infectious twinkle in his keen eyes, a quizzical droop of one eyebrow (as of one who looked upon the world and found it strangely perverse) and a suggestion of a smile that continually lurked about the corners of his aristocratic mouth. Affable and cultured, loving creature comforts and the pleasant sociabilities of the upper classes, he was perfectly well satisfied with that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call him. If he had remained only a judge, he would have been respected but unremembered, loved by his friends but forgotten by posterity. Other historic and political writings came from his pen later,

but they were all, despite their serious character, associated with his other self, the humourist. To the world at large he was to be known, not as Judge Haliburton, but by his pseudonym, "Sam Slick."

In 1835 Howe's Halifax paper, the *Nova Scotian*, came out with a series of anonymous sketches telling of the sayings and doings of a Yankee clockmaker and peddler, Samuel Slick of Slickville. This queer character represented the typical New England itinerant salesman of the period—shrewd, bustling, self-assured, loquacious, selling his clocks, usually at exorbitant prices, "by a knowledge of soft sawder and human natur'." His talk, an unfailing stream of quaint, vivid, Yankee dialect, full of sly humour, racy anecdote and the sort of homely prudence we find in proverbs, made him everywhere welcome. With the fair sex he was particularly irresistible. "Women," he always contended, require "the identical same treatment" as horses. "Encourage the timid ones, be gentle and steady with the fractious ones, but lather the sulky ones like blazes." Bragging he had cultivated as a business virtue. "It saves advertising," he argued, and confessed that he always did it, because, "as the Nova Scotia magistrate said who sued his debtor before himself, 'what's the use of being a justice if you can't do yourself justice?'" He boasted especially of his acuteness in business; and some of his most amusing anecdotes tell of his sharpness in business dealing—as, for instance, when he gloried in having sold a trotting horse with the heaves, by advertising it as "too heavey for harness." To Haliburton's readers this lanky, sharp-eyed American, with

his broad hat and shrunken clothes, was a very real person. He fitted exactly their notions of the typical Yankee—large-hearted, likeable, a delight to have by the kitchen fire on a raw night, with his cajolery, his funny sayings and his inexhaustible supply of queer yarns; but in business as sharp as a steel trap.

So popular were these columns in the *Nova Scotian* that they were copied in American newspapers, and were reissued in book form both in England and America. Ultimately it became known that their author was Judge Haliburton of Nova Scotia. Several series of the Sam Slick narratives followed. Everybody read them. They were amongst the best sellers of the day. It is told of a Danish governor at St. Thomas in the West Indies that whenever his court became involved in a knotty problem he would say, "We must adjourn until to-morrow. I should like to look into this point. I must see what Sam Slick has to say about it." The narratives were even considered worthy of being classed with the works of Dickens and Thackeray; and of the crowning honour of being translated into a foreign language.

Haliburton said himself that he was scarcely aware how he had hit upon the character of Sam Slick. When he started his rambling talks in the *Nova Scotian* he had no intention of putting his thoughts into the mouth of a Yankee clockmaker. "Sam Slick," he confessed, "slipped into my book before I was aware of it, and once there, he was there to stay." He has, in fact, stayed ever since; for, although he was too often just a convenient mouthpiece for his author's opinions,

he has taken his place in literature with Sam Weller, Tom Sawyer, David Harum and other immortal vendors of fun and philosophy. Artemus Ward, indeed, went so far as to say that the Sam Slick papers were the source of American humour. Haliburton blazed the trail of comic exaggeration and shrewd wisdom which has since been followed by most American humourists and has become the common highway of the newspaper "col-yumist."

With the honour of being a literary pioneer went grave disadvantages. Sam Slick said many shrewd and pungent things, but the best of them have been repeated so often that they now seem as flat as items from a last year's catalogue. "A joke," Sam Slick declared, "like an egg, is never no good except it is fresh." Haliburton's trick of epigram has been caught and developed until it is the stock-in-trade of every clever short-story writer of to-day. Even his portrait of the typical Yankee has been improved upon, made more sparkling, consistent and racy. Haliburton was of the last century. He was verbose, excessively given to moralizing, and even in his humour sometimes prosy and obvious. All these faults to the leisurely people of his age, unspoiled by light magazines and rapid movies, were not irksome. But the modern reader will find Sam Slick rather tedious. He will feel sympathy with that good lady who was disappointed in *Hamlet* because she found it so full of quotations. The founding of a school is an honourable but a dangerous task for any writer; and Haliburton has suffered from being too much admired.

Despite the fact, however, that Haliburton's writings

are of yesterday, out of fashion and a little threadbare, the modern reader will find in them much that is amusing. An abridged edition of "Sam Slick," which leaves out obscure contemporary references and pages of confused and idle conversation, makes excellent reading, and "The Old Judge" is interesting through and through. This latter volume is a collection of sketches of early colonial society. In it we see the rude, stirring life of pioneer days in Nova Scotia. We get glimpses of Halifax, with its fortifications, its broken-down wharves and its wild and picturesque surroundings. We take refuge from a winter storm in a roadside inn with its glorious wood fire and its great bar-room furnished with generous casks and jars, and papered with auction notices, quack medicine advertisements and hand-bills calling a meeting for the organization of a political party or the promotion of temperance. We meet the people of the time: the Lieutenant-Governor, that tall, gaunt, iron-framed man, stiff but condescending, with his aristocratic, brainless aides and his daughter who lisped of "danthing only with her own thet;" the defendant in a lawsuit who insisted on his lawyer downing his chief opponent with the question, "How many fins has a codfish?" the blooming country lass, with her good-natured, awkward admirer at a "picnick stir" where, to be sure, "every critter finds his own fodder;" and that stern disciplinarian of the school-room who translates Horace's "*Nocturna versate manu versate diurna*" as, "Turn them up and whip them by day or by night when needed." They are all there and they are all real and delightfully laughable.

That reader, too, who feels an interest in the development of political ideas in Canada will read Haliburton with considerable interest. In politics Haliburton was a reactionary Conservative—a strict Tory of the old school—with no faith whatever in democratic institutions. He was Joseph Howe's lifelong friend, yet with deep regret he looked back to those peaceful days before his turbulent comrade had agitated the province with his demands for responsible government. Responsible government, Haliburton held, was responsible nonsense. And universal suffrage was worse. "Now, men of property and education," says Mr. Hopewell in the *Attaché*, "make laws to govern rogues and vagabonds, but by your beautiful scheme of universal suffrage rogues and vagabonds will make laws to govern men of property and character." In popular politics Haliburton saw only lazy chit-chat, flattery and the evil influence of the insincere and villainous demagogue. Political meetings and political discussions merely gave the shiftless Nova Scotian a chance to leave his useful work and go searching for a Bluenose Utopia in the moonshine of political catchwords. Salvation for his native province, he thought, lay not in cultivating grievances, but in cultivating farms, not in constant agitations for reform of a perfectly acceptable constitution, but in industry, thrift and contentment.

One excuse Haliburton made for his fellow-countrymen. They were only colonists and hence necessarily provincial. Colonies he compared to frog ponds, which have no outlets into the great ocean of world affairs, and hence can produce no creatures of a higher order

than frogs. There were, in his opinion, three possible remedies for Canada's deplorable situation; incorporation with England and representation in her parliament; complete independence; or annexation with the United States. For the first of these he argued forcibly. "It shouldn't be England and her colonies, but they should be integral parts of one great whole—all counties of great Britain." Thus he made his contribution to the solution of the unprecedented problem of our imperial relationships. It was too soon for even his prophetic eye to see the ultimate solution—a commonwealth of free nations, each with an independent parliament but all united under a single sovereign.

In 1856 he resigned his judgeship and moved to England, where he purchased a beautiful old manor house on the banks of the Thames. In 1857 he was elected to the British House of Commons. His achievements in this new field were not remarkable. He was too old to adapt himself to unfamiliar conditions. But in spite of this he did much to persuade the British Government of the desirability of a closer union with the colonies. Before he died he visited Upper Canada, where he made certain purchases of land in and about the county which now bears his name. His death occurred at his home in England on August 27th, 1865.

V

JOSEPH HOWE

WHEN Howe said, "Poetry was the maiden I loved, but politics was the harridan I married," was there a twinkle of mischief in his blue eyes, or was he, too, afflicted with the sentimental delusion which haunts most of us, that destiny, our cruel stepmother, has stifled the more tender aspirations of our souls? Whichever it was, this account of himself is curiously misleading. Poetry was the maiden he flirted with in a clumsy whole-souled manner, as a country boy of parts might try to shine before the fair eyes of a city cousin; but politics, harridan though she might be with her violent conflicts and uncertain favours, was the wife of his bosom, the woman whom he had courted and married, and whom he loved unceasingly until his death.

For Joseph Howe was a fighter. Conflict was the breath of his nostrils and the fire of his blood. His courage and aggressiveness were astounding. Nothing daunted him—the indignation of lieutenant-governors, the fury of angry mobs, the wrath of an entrenched oligarchy. He was the stormy petrel of Nova Scotian politics. Wherever trouble was brewing, and trouble brewed

often in the Nova Scotia of a century ago, he was in the midst of it, receiving blows and dealing harder ones, giving always better than he got.

His entry upon the stage of public life was in itself significant. It was preceded by "alarums and excursions" and heralded by the blast of trumpets and the thunder of drums. His rôle was that of challenger of a corrupt officialdom; his weapon the immaterial one of legal argument; his battle-ground the plain little Court House of Halifax; but his performance was one of the most stirring episodes in the annals of Nova Scotia.

Before this lawsuit he was a familiar figure in his native town. Any resident of that rambling old seaport could have pointed him out—a sturdy, well-knit man, with fair hair, blue eyes and blunt, pugnacious features; a man of the people, brimming over with animal spirits, fun and energy, hail-fellow-well-met with every second person on the street. Most of his fellow-townsmen were acquainted with the facts of his career. They knew that his father was that huge, solemn man, the King's Printer and Provincial Postmaster—a very modest position with an imposing title—who lived two miles out of town in a cottage overlooking the inner harbour, and came in every Sunday with his Bible under his arm to preach to the Sandemainians. They were aware that Joe, because of his family's straitened means, had left school at an early age to assist in his father's business; that he had worked for his living ever since; and that now he was married and editor of the *Nova Scotian*. Many of them took his

weekly newspaper and watched regularly for an instalment of the editor's "Rambles," or his reports of what was stirring in the province. Every one knew Joe Howe, the editor; but the Joseph Howe who was to write his name on the pages of history as one of the most powerful orators and most aggressive popular leaders of British North America was unknown before this legal encounter with the governing magistrates of Halifax.

The cause of the lawsuit was an anonymous letter that appeared in the *Nova Scotian* on January 1, 1835—that is when Howe was thirty years of age. This letter openly accused the city's rulers of flagrant thefts from the public funds. So outspoken were its charges that it threw the whole town into a fever of excitement. The people were delighted with the boldness of their champion, but fearful for the editor's welfare. To sanction such an attack against the privileged oligarchy who were responsible only to the governor (this was in the days of aristocratic monopoly) was to put one's head in a noose. The families who ruled the city were the families who ruled the law courts. And the offended magistrates were not slow to take action. They immediately demanded a prosecution for criminal libel against the editor of the newspaper. In some anxiety Howe went to several lawyers. They all declared that he had no defence and advised him to make his peace as best he could. But peace was not what this intrepid young journalist ever cared to make. From one of the lawyers he borrowed an armful of books dealing with the laws and precedents governing libel, and for two

weeks, day and night, he buried himself in these ponderous volumes.

On the day of the trial the court-room was crowded to the doors. The case against the editor was ably presented by the prosecuting attorney; and then, amid an awed silence, Howe rose to make his own defence.

Never before had he spoken in the presence of so many people. He was pale; his movements showed signs of nervousness; his first words came slowly, guardedly; but in ten minutes he was launching a furious onslaught against his enemies. The plaintiffs had chosen to enter suit for criminal libel which, according to the laws of the day, precluded any attempt to establish the truth of the charges. Herein seemed to lie the hopelessness of Howe's position; but he took the bull by the horns, and made this one of his chief points of attack. Why had his accusers not taken their proceedings in a form in which the truth or falsity of his charges could have been amply enquired into?

"Gentlemen, they dared not do it," he thundered with clenched fists. "Yes, my lords, I tell them in your presence and in the presence of the community whose confidence they have abused, that they dared not do it. They knew that 'discretion was the better part of valour,' and that it might be safer to attempt to punish me than to justify themselves." And with withering scorn he added, "There is a certain part of a ship through which when a seaman crawls, he subjects himself to the derision of the deck, because it is taken as an admission of cowardice and incompetence; and had not these jobbing justices crawled in

here through this legal lubber-hole of indictment, I would have sent them out of court in a worse condition than Falstaff's ragged regiment—they would not have dared to march, even through Coventry, in a body."

In his peroration he struck the great note of freedom of the press, declaring, "Yes, gentlemen, come what will, while I live, Nova Scotia shall have the blessings of an open and unshackled press."

The judge, in summing up the evidence, said that in his opinion the letter was undoubtedly a libel. But the jury, who had been deeply touched by Howe's eloquence (one old man had been reduced to tears), took only ten minutes to bring in an unanimous decision of "not guilty." The populace who thronged the court-house burst into cheers. They raised Howe upon their shoulders and bore him triumphantly home. Bands paraded the streets until far into the night. A victory had been won—a victory against the entrenched army of privilege—and it had been won by the indomitable courage of a single man. The discredited magistrates resigned in a body, and although the out-worn system of municipal government was not immediately changed, the administration of the city's affairs was from that time considerably improved.

This triumph made Howe the most conspicuous figure in Halifax. A provincial election occurred the following year and in a whirlwind of popular enthusiasm he was swept into the Assembly.

In the thirties of last century Nova Scotia may have seemed a quiet place to live in—quiet at least to the aged settlers who remembered the bloody wars

and raids of earlier days—but for those who entered politics it was a stirring battle-ground of dispute. The situation was a complex one, but the issue which emerged from the religious and political confusion as the crux of the whole matter was that of responsible government. Around this vexed question the smoke of battle rose, not only in Nova Scotia, but from one end of British North America to the other.

Howe summed up the situation as follows: "In England the people can breathe the breath of life into their government whenever they please; in this country the government is like an ancient Egyptian mummy, wrapped up in narrow and antique prejudices—dead and inanimate, but yet likely to last for ever."

It was in 1836 that Howe emerged from the comparative seclusion of his editorial sanctum into the fierce light of party politics. Almost immediately he took his place as Liberal leader, and the battle was on. His turbulent spirit affected the whole Assembly. Through his instigation a resolution was passed protesting against the Council's practice of meeting behind closed doors. The Council replied that its manner of meeting was its own business. Howe countered by drawing up a resolution containing not one but twelve points of protest. The Council, ignoring eleven of the counts against its practices, demanded an immediate withdrawal of one, an insinuation that certain of its members were disposed "to protect their own interests and emoluments at the expense of the public." The Upper House went so far as to hint that if this accusation were not withdrawn, funds for the carrying

on of public works would be withheld. Here they had the Assembly in a tight corner. Howe seemed to be beaten. On receiving the Council's reply he lay awake all one night puzzling over what could be done. By morning he had worked out his course. When the Assembly met, gloomy and dispirited, rather disgusted with this rash young journalist who had got them into such a quandary, Howe rose from his seat, hitched back his coat collar with a characteristic gesture, expanded his broad chest and began. He would move, not that the one contentious point be struck out, but that the whole resolution be rescinded, and that a Committee be appointed to draw up a new resolution, this time not to the Council, but to the King. It was a dramatic stroke. The members of the Council of Twelve, when they learned of it, were furious; but they could do nothing. The resolution was sent and was in a measure successful. A new body was formed to take over part of the duties of the Council of Twelve; and the governor was given instructions in choosing his councillors not to confine himself to the narrow clique that had so far held the ascendancy.

It was at about this stage that the unfortunate rebellion broke out in the Canadas, and was followed by Lord Durham's strong recommendation for the granting of responsible government. But Lord John Russell, who was then Colonial Secretary, had decided views on imperial relationships. Although he realized that something must be done, he felt that to grant responsible government to a colony was to make that colony virtually independent of the Mother Country. He could

not see his way to so fundamental a change, and in a public utterance made his position clear.

Here was a foeman worthy of Howe's steel. Without demur he accepted the challenge. In a series of letters distributed to all the members of the British House of Commons and to the Press generally, he attacked Lord John Russell's position. These letters were magnificent achievements in sane and powerful argument. The Home authorities recognized their force, and in 1839 Lord John Russell sent a despatch making more emphatic the necessity of governing in accordance with the people's wishes, and warning office-holders that they were liable to dismissal "as often as any sufficient motives of public policy may suggest the expediency of that measure."

This in effect would have meant responsible government—if it had been honestly carried out. But it was not carried out. Sir Colin Campbell, that splendid associate of Wellington in India and the Peninsula, was at that time Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. To this old soldier, whose admirable spirit knew no higher virtue than unquestioning devotion to duty, all political agitations seemed the mere grumbling of a shiftless and discontented people. He had been sent out to govern with justice and benevolence, and this he would do to the best of his ability. But he would brook no interference from below. He refused to heed a vote of want of confidence in his Executive. The Assembly entered a vigorous protest against this ignoring of their wishes, only to be met by evasive answers and procrastination. Incited by Howe, they next took the

unprecedented step of asking Her Majesty to recall her representative and to send out one who would "not only represent the Crown, but carry out its policy with firmness and good faith;" and to the surprise of many the Home Government acceded to the request, recalled Sir Colin and sent out Lord Falkland.

It is pleasant to know that Sir Colin Campbell and Howe, despite the fact that their opinions were at opposite poles, each recognized the other's virtues. Just before Sir Colin left for England he met Howe at the new Governor's levée. Howe was about to pass with a bow when the veteran stopped him. "We must not part in this way, Mr. Howe," he said. "We fought out our differences of opinion honestly. You have acted like a man of honour. There is my hand." Howe warmly grasped the extended hand and the two parted friends.

But Howe's fight was not yet over. Before victory was his he was forced to take the scalp of another Lieutenant-Governor. Lord Falkland, more complacent than his predecessor, tried to bring all parties together in a coalition government. Howe, with some of his colleagues, was induced to accept a seat in the Executive, and for a time all went well. But the situation was anomalous. Outside Government House Howe was the virulent enemy of the Tories; inside its walls he was supposed to be their friend and co-worker. Such a state of things could not last. Howe was not the man to be satisfied with a compromise. It must be complete responsible government or nothing. In the end he was forced to resign his seat in the Council

and to open once more his hostilities against the forces of reaction.

The political conflict which followed was long and fierce. The opposing parties fought several election campaigns and pelted each other unmercifully through the press. Some time before, under the pressure of public business, Howe had sold the *Nova Scotian;* but at this juncture he was persuaded to resume the editorship. His office became the headquarters of the Liberal party. "We have often seen him," wrote a colleague, "dashing off an editorial which was to set the whole province laughing or thinking, surrounded by a mob of friends planning some movement or preparing for some meeting." He would ride about the province on horseback, delivering as many as three addresses in a day, every one of them bubbling with spontaneous humour and poetic fancy. His affability won him innumerable friends; his undying pugnacity made him many enemies. He quarrelled violently with the Baptists over some petty money matter connected with the publication of their official organ, the *Christian Messenger;* he risked his political fortunes by advocating public schools supported, if necessary, by direct taxation; he showed his clear-headedness, but his lack of tact, by trying to unite in one state university the five sectarian colleges that had sprung up in different parts of the province; and all the time he bombarded Lord Falkland and his Tory cohorts in a way to bring joy to the heart of the most thorough-going reformer. An example of his satire will give the smack of his poetic style. The following is an extract from what

purported to be a letter written by his Lordship to a friend;

"In my public despatch, my position, *en beau*,
Is set off to the greatest advantage, you know;
When you read you'll think I have nothing to bore me,
But am driving Bluenoses like poultry before me.
I'm sorry to own, yet the fact must be stated,
The game is all up and I'm fairly checkmated.
The poacher in Chaucer, with a goose in his breeches,
Was betrayed by the neck peeping through the loose stitches.
And I must acknowledge, unfortunate sinner,
As my griefs are enlarging, my breeches get thinner;
And I feel if I do not soon make a clean breast,
That from what you observe you will guess at the rest."

It was Lord Falkland who at last grew weary of the fray. After having his carriage horses shot so that they would not fall into the hands of any commoner, he finally packed up his trunks and left. Under the administration of the next Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Harvey, what was virtually responsible government came into effect. Howe thus won, without firing a musket, and without in any way impairing his reputation for unimpeachable loyalty, what had cost many lives and the loss of much property to gain in the Canadas.

After the conclusion of the fight for popular government, the next great problem that faced Nova Scotia was that of intercolonial communications. The most pressing need was for a railway connecting Nova Scotia,

New Brunswick and the Canadas. This and other projected lines were much talked of, but the difficulty of raising funds was a serious stumbling block. It occurred to Howe that an Imperial guarantee would substantially lower the rate of interest on borrowed money. Yet how to obtain such a guarantee was the problem. Earl Grey, who was then Colonial Secretary, was a staunch believer in the non-interference of governments in business enterprise. He had, moreover, already rebuffed one request for assistance. Could he be brought to reconsider his decision and forsake his whole life policy in favour of this particular colonial project? The majority of the people in Nova Scotia thought not; but Howe, with his indomitable optimism, believed that his powers of persuasion could change his Lordship's mind. He sailed for England; he appealed to his Lordship, he appealed to the people; he argued, he pleaded, he pamphleteered; and in the end he triumphantly returned to Halifax with a written assurance in his pocket of a loan at the small rate of three per cent. This victory was the height of his achievement. The people were wildly enthusiastic and he was openly exultant.

It remained to persuade New Brunswick and the Canadas to take up the project. Howe's scheme was for a government railway running well within the national boundary. The people of New Brunswick, although sympathetic, were much more interested in a proposed line to connect the more settled parts of the province with Portland, Maine. By including this latter branch in the general proposal Howe was able to win New

Brunswick to his side. He next visited Toronto, Montreal and Quebec, where he and his schemes were received with hearty approval. But just when his hopes were about to be realized they were dashed to the ground. A letter suddenly came from the Colonial Office indicating curtly that no support could be given to the Portland line. This without doubt would alienate New Brunswick and so wreck the whole enterprise. Howe was indignant. No such restrictions had been included in the original promise. Arguments and negotiations were carried on with the Colonial Office but to no avail. After all his efforts his scheme of a government-constructed railway came to nothing, and in the end the work of building the railway fell to the lot of private enterprise.

It was a bitter pill for Howe, and from this time his disposition seemed to alter. With Alan Breck's fighting qualities he also had some of that stalwart Highlander's egotism. His pet railway scheme had failed. Other men were promoting other plans. No longer was he the one and only public benefactor. Magnificent in the heat of battle, he lacked that modest fortitude which takes a disappointment or a personal slight with equanimity. He sulked. Like Achilles in the Grecian camp, if he could not have his own choice he would have none at all. Most great men have their weaknesses and egotism was Howe's.

After the new railway projects were fairly on their way, however, he relented enough to assume the duties of Railway Commissioner. This office, he possibly felt, would be a haven of rest after his long and stormy

career in the Executive. But the year following his appointment, his work of promoting and directing railway enterprise was interrupted by a rather turbulent interlude. This was in 1855. The Crimean War, that dreary and profitless struggle, was in full swing. Recruits were badly needed for the British army, and Howe was sent to New York, there to do a little tactful and unobtrusive persuading amongst British sympathizers. But his efforts were not successful. Through his own excessive zeal and the indiscretion of certain colleagues, he got himself so heartily disliked, especially among the Irish-Americans, that finally, to escape the anger of a mob, he was forced to climb from his hotel window. His mission, from which much had been expected, produced little more than international unpleasantness. And the flame of antagonism that he had lighted did not confine itself to New York. Shortly after his return to Nova Scotia he was defeated in his own riding through the defection of his Irish Catholic supporters by a sturdy little doctor named Charles Tupper, who had been for some time taking an active part in politics. Howe quickly found another seat, but the defeat was not without its sting, and the remembrance of it may have been partly responsible for certain of his later actions.

At this period in his life he seems to have become enamored of the idea of entering the British Civil Service. Some not too obscure post, he argued, should be within the reach of one who had served the Empire so long and so faithfully. To six successive Colonial Secretaries he applied, but always in vain, until at last his importunity

brought him an unimportant appointment as a sort of fisheries inspector along the Atlantic coast.

It was in this position that the movement for confederation found him, and here again he is disappointing. Possibly he was quite sincere in his contention that confederation was not the best thing for Nova Scotia, but it is to be feared that his opposition was due at least in part to his native egotism. Confederation was being advocated not by himself but by his old time opponent, Charles Tupper. In 1864 at a banquet in Halifax given in honour of certain prominent visitors from the upper provinces, he had professed himself heartily in sympathy with the proposed union, had thanked God that he could feel himself not only a Nova Scotian, but also a Canadian, and, warmed with the glow of conviviality and friendliness, had concluded with these words: "I am pleased to think the day is rapidly approaching when the provinces will be united, with one flag above our heads, one thought in all our bosoms, with one Sovereign and one constitution." Yet when the day arrived for the realization of his dream he fought it to the last ditch.

But despite its headstrong folly, it was a magnificent fight. His egotism was so far removed from calculating selfishness and so much akin to pure boyish glee in battle that it was almost splendid. Arrayed against him were most of the outstanding men in Britain and in Canada; he himself was well over sixty and silver-haired; yet he threw himself into the fray with such vigour and infectious zeal that he made the issue for a time tremble in the balance. The "Quebec Scheme"

of union he professed to find particularly obnoxious. In a series of letters to the newspapers he fulminated against it under the derisive title of "The Botheration Scheme." He toured Nova Scotia from end to end, and, delivering a series of speeches overwhelming in their crude power of argument, aroused the people to a fury of antagonism. Twice he visited England, once before the British North America Act was passed and once after, and by his eloquent pleading succeeded in winning to his side many English Liberals, amongst whom was John Bright. His reasoning was most cogent and plausible. Even to-day, when years of happy co-operation have welded the united provinces into a nation, and when the rumble of Howe's verbal drums is but a muted echo in the pages of history, we cannot read his finer letters and speeches without being moved. It is with something of a shock that we realize, on turning from his fiery oratory, that his arguments, so specious and forceful, have long since been discredited, and that the terrorizing bugaboos conjured up by his fancy have proved to be creatures stuffed with straw. The trade of Nova Scotia, borne by her 400,000 tons of shipping, has not been ruined; the United States has not thrown across our undefended borders a million men trained in the camps of war; the Canadas, with their secret societies and racial and religious enmities, have not destroyed the young nation at its birth by any bloody fratricidal strife. The united Dominion, on the contrary, has proved one of the proudest achievements of statesmanship, and the men who consummated the union have been written down in our histories as

our most honoured ancestors. We cannot but regret that such a "braw fichter" as Joseph Howe should have drawn his sword for the last time, not for the cause of great vision, but against it.

In the end Howe found himself in an impossible situation. Confederation was a *fait accompli;* and further opposition would bring nothing but bitter discontent and might even lead to civil war and bloodshed. English statesmen who had seen the bill through parliament were too well satisfied with what had been done, Tupper was too shrewd and solid, Macdonald too wily an old fox, to let a single province upset a work of such magnitude. Confronted with the hard logic of fact, Howe soon lost his fine fury, and, recognizing his mistake, was man enough to acknowledge it by accepting a portfolio in Sir John's federal cabinet. But his sins were visited on his own head. The people of Nova Scotia, whom he had stirred to such a passion of resentment against the union, felt that he had played them false. He pointed out that better terms had been won by his campaign and that further opposition was useless; but his explanations fell on deaf ears. His old supporters could not understand the mind of one who blew hot and cold so suddenly. Never did they forgive him for his apparent desertion; and when a little later his great services to Nova Scotia were recognized by his being made Lieutenant-Governor, he found that his old popularity was a thing of the past. A spiritless Howe with his claws clipped, broken in health and deeply wounded by what he felt was misunderstanding and ingratitude, he lived only a few months to

enjoy his final honour. His death in 1873 brought a reaction of feeling, but he has never been completely restored to the high place he once occupied in the opinion of his countrymen.

In measuring the greatness of Joseph Howe it is well to consider the undoubted handicaps under which he laboured. A poor lad, born and brought up in an undeveloped colony at a time when culture was the exclusive privilege of the upper classes, he became one of the greatest orators—some would say the greatest orator—that Canada has ever produced. The vividness of his imagery, the powerful exactness of his diction, the rollicking ease with which he passed from cogent reasoning to poetic fancy, have seldom been surpassed in any land. Yet his rare qualities of mind were stimulated, not by the refining influences of a classical education (though, to be sure, he read much and his mouth was constantly full of classical allusions) but by intercourse with the untrammelled loveliness of nature; and the innate pugnacity of his disposition was fostered, not by studying the art of debate, but by participating in the harsh struggle for existence. He was in every sense the true product of Nova Scotia; and he seemed most himself when, carried away by his intense devotion to his native province, he boasted of its excellences, breaking into flamboyant raptures over its beauties, its wealth, its golden possibilities. Much may be forgiven a man who loved his native land as Howe loved Nova Scotia.

VI

DR. EGERTON RYERSON

EGERTON RYERSON'S parents were both Loyalists. His father, after serving in the King's army, left the United States to settle in New Brunswick, but later followed an older brother to Upper Canada, where he occupied a homestead between the villages of Vittoria and Port Ryerse, in what is now the county of Norfolk. It was here that Egerton was born on March 24, 1803.

The atmosphere of this early home was intensely serious. The father, a man of fine old English traditions, carried into the family life the rigours of military discipline; and the mother, who was descended from the early Massachusetts Puritans, moulded the charaters of her children with prayers and tears. One scene of his boyhood remained in Egerton's memory until his death. His mother, finding him in some misdeed, had taken him into her bedroom, and there, kneeling by the bedside with her arms about him, had wept over his childish depravity and prayed for his forgiveness. The impression left on his mind of the awfulness of sin had deeply influenced his whole outlook on life.

Half a mile from the Ryerson home was the school

that the children attended. It was the district grammar school and the teacher was a young Scot who taught the usual reading, writing and arithmetic together with the rudiments of English grammar; but his instructions were necessarily limited by the crude conditions existing in the schools of the period.

Egerton Ryerson, however, at the age of fourteen, had an opportunity of attending a course of lectures in English grammar given by two travelling professors. These learned pedagogues undertook in six months "to enable a diligent scholar to parse any sentence in the English language." From one end of the week to the other they taught nothing but English grammar. Their course of lectures was assisted by elaborate charts showing the relationships of words in a sentence, and buttressed by such ponderous tomes as Murray's "Expositions and Exercises," Lord Kane's "Elements of Criticism," and Blair's "Lectures in Rhetoric." To us such a course, full of dreary analysis and hair-splitting classification, seems compact of the driest bones in the wilderness of learning; but to Egerton Ryerson, whose expanding intelligence had been held in check by the limitations of pioneer life, it opened fresh vistas of knowledge and held all the charm of a "new discovery." So thoroughly versed did he become in the mental gymnastics of grammatical parsing and analysis, that when one of his instructors fell ill, he was engaged to fill his place and for a short time lectured on the complicated syntax of his mother tongue.

When he was eighteen years old, much against

his father's wishes, Egerton followed the example of his older brothers and joined the Methodists. His father, on hearing of his son's action, said peremptorily, "Egerton, I understand that you have joined the Methodists. You must either leave them or leave my house." Proving true to his convictions, the youth next day departed from his father's house to live by his own resources. He found employment in London as an usher in a grammar school, and for two years, while his head-master engaged pleasantly in gardening and house building, he fed youthful minds on the elementary pabulum of learning and feasted his own on the solid food of Locke's "On the Human Understanding," Paley's "Moral Philosophy," and Blackstone's "Commentaries." During all this period his sense of filial duty, despite the fact that he had been turned out of his father's house neck and crop, impelled him to pay a hired man to take his place upon the farm. No blame, he was resolved, should rest on the Methodist Society for depriving a father of his son's assistance. But at the end of two years the old soldier, repenting perhaps of his harshness, went to Egerton in London and announced simply, "Egerton, you must come home." Without remonstrance Egerton complied with the command and for a short time laboured with amazing energy at the work of the farm—ploughing many acres, cradling wheat, rye and oats, and mowing and stacking hay. He felt, however, that his life's work lay in another direction, and although he had not yet decided on entering the ministry, he shortly went to Hamilton to prepare himself for one of the learned professions.

In Hamilton he attended the Gore District Grammar School, where he threw himself heart and soul into the construing and translating of Latin and Greek. With such starved eagerness did he devour the ancient writings that he overtaxed his strength, and before he had completed his first term he was brought down with brain fever, which was followed by inflammation of the lungs. His illness was long and serious, and for a time his life was despaired of.

During his tedious hours in bed his mind turned much upon his way of life. He regretted deeply that he had not heeded the advice of those who had urged him to enter the Christian ministry. With the realities of life and death staring him in the face, he vowed that if he ever recovered he would respond to the first call that came to him from the Church. The peace of mind that followed this resolve marked the turning point in his illness, but it was many weeks before he could resume his studies.

The call came with startling suddenness. One Saturday, shortly after his return to school, he went to a camp meeting about twelve miles from Hamilton, at which his brother, William, a minister on the Niagara circuit, was to have taken a prominent part. But he was shocked to learn on his arrival that his brother, because of "bleeding of the lungs," had been forced to give up his ministerial duties for perhaps a year. The following day three of the stewards came to him with the request that he take his brother's place. With his vow upon him he could do no other than comply. One of the stewards gave him a horse, another provided him

with a saddle and bridle; and at Beamsville, on Easter Sunday, 1825, at the age of 22, he preached his first sermon on the text, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

The faith that he carried to the pioneers in the depths of the Canadian forest was intensely rigid and uncompromising. In the diary which he faithfully kept during the early days of the ministry are many glimpses of his inner life. He compares his thoughts and actions with those of St. Paul, and is thereby spurred to greater endeavour. He mourns over a tendency to "over light conversation," which he finds a trying besetment. To the modern reader, whose mind is oppressed with the "burden of the mystery" of things, his absolute certainty in matters of eternal import is rather startling. After visiting the deathbed of a poor drunken wretch, he writes: "What a scene! An immortal soul just plunging into Hell, and yet hoping for Heaven!" Or again: "I watched to-day a large concourse of people assembled to witness horse racing. I stood at a distance that I might observe an illustration of human nature. Curiosity and excitement were depicted in every countenance. What is to become of this thoughtless multitude? Is there no mercy for them? Surely there is. Why will they not be saved? Because they will not come to Him."

O Egerton, were it not that most of us have known the intolerance of two-and-twenty, were it not that your courageous endurance of hardships puts you beyond condemnation, might there not be discovered in these words a certain lack of spiritual humility? Who were

you, standing apart in your youthful cocksureness, round-headed and erect, with projected under lip and hyper-serious brow, to pass judgment on the recreation of these poor settlers—men for the most part whose laborious days were spent in felling giant trees, in hauling out obstinate stumps and in forcing the ploughshare through rough, unbroken soil?

The creed that Ryerson professed was the creed of early Methodism—narrow and intolerant, but tremendously effective. No mellower belief, it is probable, could have availed against the brutalizing influences surrounding the life of the pioneer. Alone in the solitude of the forest, tormented by insect pests in summer, bitten by deadly frosts in winter, the poor settler found it hard to cling to the finer things of life. Excitement, any sort of excitement, appeared as a relief from the dull monotony of existence. The fierce appeal of strong liquor, the lascivious lure of untrammelled savagery—these were enemies that could be met only in an armour as hard and as enduring as steel. And whatever may be said against early Methodism, it must be admitted that it was a very real and a very strong force working for righteousness. It gave a bigness and eternal significance to the sorrows, hardships and toils of the pioneer and lent him strength in his struggle upwards towards the light.

If the early Methodist Church required much of its adherents, it made even greater demands on its ministers. The life of the itinerant preacher was one of great hardship and toil—a lonely existence without the comforts of a settled home. Riding on horseback through

great forests echoing with the life of wild things, splashing in summer through dark, bridgeless creeks, and in winter forcing his lonely way along roads choked with snow, he went forth upon his evangelical mission. At night he found shelter in the log house of some hospitable family, and by the dim sputtering light of a tallow candle, while the homely, pungent scent of burning wood mingled with the odours of the frugal supper, and the monotonous cry of the whip-poor-will kept him from forgetting the solitude of his surroundings, he leafed the worn pages of his Bible and wrote down his high thoughts upon life, death and eternity. It was a life that demanded heroes and bred heroisms, a life upon which we are forced to look back with feelings of wonder and admiration.

The year after Ryerson started out as a missionary, he was appointed to the York and Yonge Street circuit (now the district in and around Toronto), and almost immediately became involved in a heated controversy. Each month when he and a colleague, who also worked out from "muddy little York," completed their rounds, it was the custom of the fifty odd Methodists in town to hold a meeting for prayer and sociability; and to one of these peaceful gatherings was introduced a most alarming pamphlet. Harmlessly entitled "A Sermon Preached and Published by the Venerable Archdeacon of York in May, 1826, on the Death of the Late Bishop of Quebec," this pamphlet was in reality a most aggressive bit of sectarian propaganda. After boldly advancing the historical and legal rights of the Church of England to be recognized as the established Church of Canada,

it went on to attack in a most outspoken fashion all other Protestant bodies of Upper Canada. The Methodist Society came in for an especially severe drubbing. Its leaders were described as ignorant, conceited men who would be much better employed at manual labour, and its members were accused of being republicans openly disloyal to British institutions.

These people had long known that they were none too popular with the gentry of the Anglican Church—indeed they were not as a body allowed to hold land for churches or cemeteries, nor were their ministers permitted to perform the marriage service. But never before had they been called on to suffer an attack quite so flagrant as this. Some answer, they felt, must forthwith be made; and Egerton Ryerson, being more learned than most of them, was designated as the one who should undertake the task. On being approached he pleaded for assistance and it was left that both he and the Superintendent of the circuit should prepare replies, and that at the next meeting of the Society an attempt should be made to compile from the two arguments something adequate to the occasion.

When they reassembled a month later it was found that the Superintendent had written nothing. Egerton, however, had done his best. As he read his manuscript full of learned argument based on Blackstone and Paley, he was interrupted by "alternate laughter and tears;" and when he reached the end all demanded enthusiastically that it should be published. The young author, overcome with modesty, advanced to throw his paper into the fire, but one of the older brothers wrenched it

from his hands, saying that he himself would take it to the printers. So loud were the protests against destroying it, that Egerton at last begged it back, that he might revise it and put it in proper form for publication.

The paper burst upon uneventful little York like a bombshell. On the evening of its appearance groups of excited people could be seen on every street corner reading it and discussing it. Its echoes spread throughout the province. It was the first outspoken defence of Methodism, but it was not the last. The testy little Archdeacon, with his flashing black eyes and Aberdonian accent, had many staunch supporters. Replies quickly appeared from the Anglican side and the battle was soon joined in good earnest. Again and again Ryerson returned to the assault. As he rode from one appointment to another, he would ponder deeply over his arguments, and then at night, long after the other members of the household had gone to rest, he would feverishly assemble his thoughts on paper. "I devoted a day to fasting and prayer," he wrote in his diary, "and then went at my adversaries in good earnest." So great was his energy that in a short time he had produced a volume of from two to three hundred pages.

Despite the fact that his letters were mostly published anonymously, many guessed at their authorship and trembled for the safety of this bold young controversialist. His own father anxiously said to him: "Egerton, they say that you are the author of these papers which are convulsing the country. I want to know whether you are or not." And when Egerton admitted the authorship, the old man lifted

his hands in horror and exclaimed, "My God! We are ruined!"

But controversy did not command all Ryerson's energies. He was first and foremost a minister of the Gospel, and only in the second place a pamphleteer. While composing his argumentative papers, he was all the time devoting himself to the duties of the missionary —preaching six or seven times a week in all sorts of places—meeting-houses, private houses, taverns and Indian wigwams. His one regret was that his exacting activities allowed him little time for perfecting himself in Latin and Greek.

The most interesting, and perhaps the most valuable, part of his missionary work was that done amongst the Indians. He was stationed for a time in the little Indian village that used to cluster about the mouth of the Credit River a few miles west of York. Here he lived with a family of twelve, enjoying very little privacy, sharing in their simple meals, and sleeping on hard boards with one blanket above and one below. The teaching he offered these simple people was a wise admixture of evangelism and practical helpfulness. Raised on a farm, he was able to instruct the Indians in better and more profitable methods of tilling the land; and while the gentry of the Government were considering the advisability of erecting a church in the settlement, he collected funds from the Indians and the neighbouring Methodist Societies, and himself had a building erected to serve as joint schoolhouse and church. Nor was he afraid of hard manual labour. He would often be seen with his coat off and twenty Indian lads

about him, clearing away brushwood, erecting fences, or bringing in fuel. The Indians loved him greatly. At one of their council meetings the old chief arose and said: "Brother, as we are brothers, we will give you a name. My departed brother was named Cheehock; thou shalt be called Cheehock." He was one of themselves, and his words of love and wisdom sank deep into their simple hearts.

In many ways Egerton Ryerson played a conspicuous part in the early history of the Canadian Methodist Church. After four strenuous years his itinerant ministry ended with his first marriage (he was married twice), and his settlement at Ancaster, not far from Hamilton; but his stirring personality could not be confined within the narrow bounds of a rural pastorate. When the growing Methodist Society saw fit to start an official organ he was appointed its editor. He went himself to New York to purchase the type and other necessary equipment, and under his direction the *Christian Guardian* made its first appearance in 1829. The paper at first had less than 500 subscribers, but in a short time it became one of the leading journals of Upper Canada. In its pages Ryerson continued his campaign for religious equality until, largely as a result of his efforts, all disabilities were removed from the dissenting religious bodies. He represented his Church on many responsible missions to England and to the United States, held several important charges—including Adelaide Street Church in Toronto—and when the Methodists founded Upper Canada Academy at Cobourg (this was the academy which was later transferred to

Toronto as Victoria College) it was he who went to England to raise funds and obtain a charter, and it was he who became its first principal. His work for early Methodism would alone have made him a figure of national importance, but wider fields soon opened before him.

With the passing of the Act of Union, which, after the hurly-burly of the rebellion, started the Canadas hopefully on the road of progress, the problem of education loomed large in Upper Canada. Up to that time the demand for learning had been overshadowed by the more pressing necessity of improving the material and political conditions of life. No real system of popular education existed. Schools were few, poorly equipped, poorly attended and poorly taught. A learned clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Murray, was first appointed Superintendent of Education; but his gentle, scholarly nature failed to cope with the almost insurmountable difficulties. The task of creating out of whole cloth a complete and workable system of education, and of getting that system accepted by the people, required not the retiring studiousness of the scholar, but the sturdy aggressiveness of a man capable of pushing his way to victory. Such a man Sir Charles Metcalfe found in Egerton Ryerson.

On the retirement of the Rev. Mr. Murray in 1844, Ryerson left Victoria College to assume the office of Superintendent of Education. Fully realizing the greatness of the task that lay before him he made an extended tour abroad. He visited many countries, studied carefully their educational systems, and on his

return wrote an exhaustive report of his observations, after which he set to work.

In one act after another, each supplementing, clarifying or amending those that had gone before, he slowly built up a solid and enduring system of school laws. The teacher was his first problem. In early days no special training or qualification had been required of the teacher. Occasionally a well-read young man would spend a year or two of his life teaching; but more frequently the teacher was a cripple incapable of a hard day's work, or a loafer too indolent to earn his living by work that might bring the honest sweat to his brow. To correct this appalling condition, Dr. Ryerson founded a Normal School in Toronto and gradually made it compulsory for any one wishing to teach to pass certain qualifying examinations. This done, he next directed his attention to deciding what should be taught. Remembering, perhaps, the sad limitations of his own early schooling, he added several new subjects to the course of study then in use, and in this way constructed a curriculum that has remained with surprisingly few changes until to-day. The text-books and equipment he found were also very inadequate; yet the local school authorities were as a rule too poor to make them better. By forming a central depository in Toronto from which books, maps and other school supplies could be obtained at half price, he gave great assistance to struggling school boards. The use of uniform text-books was encouraged; grammar schools supported by fees were little by little supplanted by high schools supported largely by government grants and local taxation; and as the culmination

of his work he took the bold step of transferring the burden of education from the parents to the state by making attendance at elementary schools free and compulsory.

But although a maze of regulations emanated from his brain, Ryerson was anything but an impersonal bureaucrat. He did not, like the spider, remain hid at the centre of his web. He realized, as perhaps no educational administrator has since done, the need of enlisting the co-operation of public opinion in his projects. Not content with founding an educational journal, which should circulate to all who were interested, he himself frequently lectured to popular gatherings on such subjects as "The Importance of Education to an Agricultural People." His measure for the establishment of free schools supported by taxation was greeted by howls of protest from all old bachelors and all parents whose families had grown up. What justice could there be in making them pay for the education of their neighbours' children? It was outrageous. They would see who would force such a law on them. Nothing daunted, Dr. Ryerson "stumped" the province like a politician. With the greatest vigour in controversy he answered his opponents, laying before them with irrefutable logic the great principle of public responsibility for the education of the country's young. And in the end he triumphed. Had his victory been accompanied by the pageantry and destruction of war, it would have filled the pages of our histories; but since it resulted merely in good to the children of Ontario it is passed over with scarcely a word and none of us pause to realize the inestimable value of Ryerson's great work.

Although Ryerson got his whole system of education from abroad (he borrowed from England, Ireland, the United States and Germany), the most admirable thing about it was its complete suitability to the needs of a young and expanding country. It took root and grew like a native product. Strachan, captivated by the depth and beauty of English culture, centred his interest in the higher seats of learning; but Ryerson remembered the days of his own childhood and his heart flowed out to the poorer boys and girls who were struggling hard to gain a little useful knowledge. With amazing tenacity (his enemies called it stubborn egotism) he stuck to his task until every child throughout the province could be offered the benefits of at least an elementary education. Ryerson's system of education is Ontario's system to-day; and Ontario's system has been copied by all the newer provinces of the Dominion. It is safe to say, therefore, that Dr. Egerton Ryerson was the father of education, not only in one province, but also in most of the English-speaking provinces of Canada.

After serving thirty-two years as Superintendent of Education, Ryerson retired from office. Although he was by this time an old man, his energies were in no way impaired, and shortly afterwards he published a book on "The Loyalists of America." When his death occurred in 1882, the government, in recognition of his services, made a grant of $10,000 to his widow and a few years later a statue was unveiled to his memory in the old grounds of the Education Department in Toronto, now the Toronto Normal School.

VII

SIR JAMES DOUGLAS

JAMES DOUGLAS was a big powerful man—dark haughty, with deeply-sunken eyes, abrupt nose, and a mouth whose stern droop approached the scornful. In the fur-trade he was known as "The Black Douglas." Domineering and ruthless, he is said to have slain an Indian murderer with his own hands, dragging the poor skulking wretch from under a pile of furs by the hair and despatching him on the spot. He was formal and weighty in his utterances and a great believer in the efficacy of official display. When he was appointed governor of British Columbia he was disgusted to find that the salary was not large enough to support what he considered the full dignity of the office. Yet withal he possessed the Scot's deep respect for culture and religion, read much and talked entertainingly in English or French, lived with an austerity unusual in those days of rough-and-tumble ethics, and in his dealings with the natives and the lawless motley of the gold rush stood with fine tenacity for the principles of British justice.

He was a man's man—strong, masterful, unflinching. He was far-sighted and sagacious at a time when passions

ran high and men reckoned little of the morrow; despotic, when only despotism could preserve law and order. He was, in short, a Hudson's Bay man through and through, drilled in the strict discipline of that ancient company, obeying orders unquestioningly when it was his to obey, and issuing them like an admiral when it was his to command. And his virile personality has left on the province of British Columbia an impress that is enduring.

To give anything like a connected account of Douglas's career is impossible. He kept no diary during the period of his most important activities—at least none that is now available; wrote few personal letters; published no volume of reminiscences. The main facts of his life have been duly recorded: he was born at Demerara, British Guiana, in 1803, but was educated in Scotland; when he was sixteen years of age he followed two older brothers to Canada, where he enlisted in the fur-trade; he started as a clerk in the offices of the North-West Company at Fort William, but when this company was absorbed into the Hudson's Bay Company he entered the service of the latter; in 1823 or '24 he was assigned to New Caledonia, beyond the Rockies (now British Columbia); here he married an attractive half-breed girl, daughter of a prominent factor. As the years went on he slowly rose to prominence. He became very influential in the Company; was appointed governor of Vancouver Island, and finally of the mainland as well. This last position he honourably held until the eve of Confederation, when he retired to spend the remainder of his days in rest and foreign

travel. He died at his home in Victoria on August 1, 1877. So much is certain, but beyond the facts contained in this bare outline of his life little connected biographical material is obtainable. Significant glimpses, however, may be caught of his remarkable career—glimpses that reveal a stern inexorable nature forging its way to the front, glimpses that reveal in a striking manner a whole section of the Dominion of Canada in the making.

From the confused mass of general information to which his unfortunate biographers have been limited, four episodes, each vivid and convincing, each characteristic of a certain stage of his career, stand out conspicuously.

The darkness that obscures most of his early life is dispelled for a moment by the spotlight that follows another figure across the stage. Douglas was at the time in charge at Fort James, a lonely trading post in the heart of New Caledonia. It was a wild and lonely spot. All about extended a vast forest, wrapping the whole region in gloom. The shaggy evergreens, stately and sombre, gathered closely around three sides of the fort, while off to the north, like a broad ribbon, stretched the glistening surface of Lake Stuart. The fort itself, a small collection of log huts surrounded by a stockade of sharpened logs, stood dejectedly in the midst of a rough oasis of fallen tree trunks, massed ferns and charred stumps. The Indians in the neighbourhood were treacherous and none too friendly, but this remote trading centre, under Douglas's command, was passing its days in a slumberous routine, when notice

arrived of an impending event of some importance. Sir George Simpson, the great governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, was about to make a visit of inspection, and Douglas was to prepare a welcome that would duly impress the neighbouring Indians.

The reception which followed was unique and impressive. As the appointed hour drew near Douglas and his fellows, together with a number of blanketed savages, waited within the fort for the arrival of the visitors. Outside all was silent, except, we may suppose, for the alarmed clamour of crows in the treetops. Then from the depths of the forest there emerged a curious procession. A single erect figure bearing the British ensign marched in front of a band of pipers and buglers; next came the haughty, important little governor himself, accompanied by two lesser officers of the Company, all mounted. Twenty sturdy *voyageurs* followed, each with a heavy pack upon his back; while another officer with his family brought up the rear. As this remarkable band of travellers caught sight of the fort, the bugles sounded and the pipers struck up a shrill march of the clans. The wild ardour of the music, heard so far from its native hills, seemed strangely at home in these savage solitudes. And Douglas, like an ancient Scottish chieftain, after replying with cannon and muskets, advanced to meet his guests. When the formal greetings were over, the pipers led the way into the fort and with swinging kilts, puffed cheeks and flashing eyes paraded grandly around the gallery inside the palisade. The Indians all the while regarded with solemn wonder the ceremonious meeting of the great white chiefs.

The second episode, which occurred some years later, might have been taken from the pages of R. M. Ballantyne. In the early spring of 1843 a sturdy wooden vessel, with the tall spars and rigging of a sailing ship but the funnel of a steamer, was to be seen ploughing its way through the blue waves of Juan de Fuca Strait towards the southern extremity of Vancouver Island. Slowly it rounded a point, sought out a certain beautiful little inlet whose shores were thickly wooded, entered and with a sudden splash and rattle dropped its anchor. The Indians, who had a village at the head of the bay, surrounded the ship in their canoes, and examined it with great curiosity. But the white men, intent on their own purposes, paid little heed to the natives. As quickly as possible a boat was lowered, and the big fur trader in charge of the expedition (he might have been recognized as James Douglas) was rowed to the shore.

Tradition has it that the part of the shore upon which Douglas first set foot was knee-deep in clover; and whether this is true or not the fact remains that a certain point jutting out into the bay now goes by the name of Clover Point. A short period of exploration ensued. Every promising bit of level forest land was paced off and carefully examined. And when a suitable site for a fort was found in an open grove of oak trees, tools were brought on shore, and work was immediately commenced. Trees were felled, cleaned and squared into beams, and before many days had passed the framework of crude buildings began to take shape. The Indians, glad to have a trading depot so close to their

homes, assisted in the work of construction. They borrowed axes and other tools from the white men and proceeded to chop pickets for the stockade, for which they received payment at the rate of one blanket for forty pickets. As time went on other Indians were attracted to the spot by the tales of their brothers, and a Jesuit priest, who accompanied the expedition, after celebrating mass in a rude chapel constructed of pine branches and canvas, baptized over twelve hundred savages.

Steadily the hatchets kept up their busy din, starting sharp echoes amongst the leafy tops of trees unused to such commotion. Picket was erected by picket, and beam was placed on beam, all being tightly joined together with wooden pegs in place of nails, until as spring melted into summer the structure took on the semblance of a fort. Stores, post-office, smithy, carpenter's shops, sleeping quarters for the men and sleeping quarters for the officers, a chapel, and a powder magazine—all were snugly gathered within a tall stockade one hundred and fifty yards square. At each corner of this stockade was built a sturdy bastion equipped with muskets, cutlasses and nine-pounders. The fort was designed, in fact, to be a village complete in itself and defensible against any force not provided with artillery.

When the work had been got well under way, Douglas had sailed north to dismantle two old posts of the company, whose usefulness had disappeared. Before long, however, he returned, bringing with him the men who had been in charge of the vacated posts. With such reinforcements the work went forward even more rapidly.

By October it was finished and Douglas, considering the post quite capable of its own defence, left a certain Charles Ross in command and returned to his own headquarters at Fort Vancouver.

Such is the story of the founding of the trading post called Fort Camosun, which as the years went by developed into that city of delightful climate, delightful vistas and delightful people—the city of Victoria. With Victoria the next glimpse of Douglas's life is also very closely associated.

The year 1858 found him comfortably established there in the dual capacity of governor of all the territory west of the Rockies for the Hudson's Bay Company, and Governor of Vancouver Island for the Crown. In the interval which had elapsed since its founding this trading post had outgrown its original limits. Two or three hundred acres of land in the neighbourhood had been brought under cultivation by the company, a church had been built and a school, and quite a cluster of small houses had sprung up outside the stockade. In one of these, a plain but comfortable dwelling, Douglas lived with his wife and family. The stirring activities of his earlier days had given place to the unexacting duties required of the governor of a thoroughly-organized company and a widely-scattered population. But his peace was suddenly disturbed. For some time vague rumours of gold discoveries had been going the rounds amongst the Company's employees. As a result of a certain glowing report there had even been a stampede of gold seekers to Queen

Charlotte Island. But although some deposits of gold had been brought to light here and elsewhere, thorough investigation had hitherto always resulted in disillusionment. In '58, however, word went abroad of immensely rich finds in the sandy beds of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, and the great gold rush was on.

Victoria was transformed over night. In the meadows outside the stockade a host of tents sprang up like mushrooms. Scores of plain, unpainted buildings followed. The streets, which had hitherto been mere rutted trails rambling amongst the houses, became bustling thoroughfares crowded with wagons and motley pedestrians. The Company's stores, where squaws had previously haggled for an hour or so over a few yards of gaudy calico or an iron frying-pan, blossomed into busy emporiums of trade. Every other day some steamer would draw up to the dock and disgorge several hundred oddly assorted men, old and young, poverty-stricken, ill-clad adventurers and wealthy speculators, respectable citizens and thorough-going desperadoes, all with the light of the gold fever gleaming in their restless eyes. Most of these newcomers, equipped with picks, shovels, revolvers and gold dust bags, reembarked in small boats for the coast; but many, whose purpose was to profit by the increased population, remained to build up the town. Supplies almost gave out, prices rose enormously, and still the rush went on. From being a sleepy trading post on the margin of a wilderness Victoria developed in a few months into one of the most active shipping centres on the western shores of the continent.

These amazing events brought out Douglas's true mettle. The fate of the Empire in that remote corner of the world seemed for a time to hang in the balance. With such an inrush of foreigners no one could tell what the future might bring forth. It was a crisis which called for inspiration, for daring, for swift action; and upon Douglas fell the responsibility of upholding the dignity and authority of the British Crown.

Never for a moment did he falter. From the beginning he made himself unquestioned master of the situation. His huge frame and strong, weather-tanned face, whose every lineament suggested force of character, created feelings of confidence; and his decisive measures commanded respect. In order to keep some rein on the progress of affairs he decreed that all those who wished to mine in British territory must provide themselves with licences obtained at Victoria. This done, he took it upon himself to visit the mainland, despite the fact that his position gave him authority only over Vancouver Island. From camp to camp he journeyed up the Fraser River canyon, everywhere establishing the machinery of law and order. At one point he learned that a nest of speculators had staked out a large area of land and were selling it to newcomers at rich profit to themselves. These illegal land-grabbers he quickly put to rout. At another camp he discovered that the miners had themselves formed a government and had placarded the buildings with various proclamations Tactfully, but firmly, he deposed this government appointed authorities of his own choosing, and replace

the irregular proclamations with decrees in the name of the British Crown.

His instincts were those of the empire builder. He might easily have evaded the hardships and danger involved in bringing law to lawless men. He was indeed risking severe censure by his bold assumption of authority. But he was a big enough man to meet unprecedented circumstances with unprecedented measures. And when the home authorities heard of his audacity, instead of censuring him, they immediately took steps to make his position legal. The Hudson's Bay Company's rights were curtailed; the territory was transformed into a crown colony under the name of British Columbia; Douglas, in recognition of his services, was created the first governor and granted almost absolute power; and a new section of the empire was born.

It but remains to present the final phase of Douglas' official career. In 1863 he retired from the governorship of Vancouver Island, and in 1864 from the governorship of the mainland. He was only sixty years of age and was still rugged and vigorous, but his period of usefulness to the colonies was passing. Conditions were rapidly changing. A population of permanent settlers was taking the place of the floating population of the mining camps. The demand was growing for a more democratic form of government. In many of his acts Douglas had to batter down considerable opposition. But as the newspaper which fought him most seriously explained: "If we have opposed the

measures of government, we have never, in our criticism of the public acts of the executive head of that government, failed in our esteem for the sterling honesty of purpose which has guided those acts, nor for the manly and noble qualities and virtues which adorn the man." And when the time arrived for yielding to the popular clamour, Douglas did so with excellent grace. One of his last official acts was to establish on the mainland a representative body similar to the one that had for years assisted in the government of Vancouver Island.

His retirement was marked by several public banquets and the usual sheaf of complimentary addresses. Needless to say these speeches were full of flattering generalities, but through them there also ran a note of real appreciation. The following extract from an address presented to him at New Westminister is worth quoting:

"The great road system which Governor Douglas has introduced into the colony is an imperishable monument of his judgment and foresight. It has already rendered his name dear to every miner, and future colonists will wonder how so much could have been accomplished with such small means. The colony already feels the benefit resulting from his unwavering policy in this respect, and year by year will the wisdom of that policy become more manifest."

On both Vancouver Island and the mainland the excellent roads that Douglas had built did a great deal to open up the country for settlement. And his name will always be connected with the famous Cariboo Wagon Road, which winds up the Fraser Canyon to the heart of the Cariboo mining district.

After retirement Douglas fulfilled a long-cherished desire to travel to Europe. He visited England and many of the continental countries. But his heart remained in British Columbia. When his tour was over he returned happily to Victoria, where he died of heart failure on August 1, 1877.

VIII

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

WHEN we of to-day think of Canada's first premier, we have a vision of a tall, stately figure, standing with one foot slightly forward and one hand raised impressively as he utters the sententious epigram: "A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die." The figure is very fine and noble, but somehow rather distant and cold and lofty. It is strangely like a statue.

The contrast between this lifeless image and the real Sir John is not without its significance. It is so that all notable men are sooner or later relegated to the limbo of historic greatness. But John A., the most human of statesmen, has suffered more than others. When the generation that knew him has passed, what will be left? An unvisited grave in a village cemetery, two or three learned biographies that are all too seldom off the shelves, a page or two in our histories from which the schoolboy gathers that "Sir John A. Macdonald put through Confederation and the Pacific scandal," and a few stone statues in our parks for the sparrows to light on. His personality, so full and rich, is being completely lost in the confused mass of constitutional history.

Yet this is not perhaps so surprising. His was an elusive nature. To describe him as this or that, to label him with any of the accepted epithets, was impossible. All things to all men, he could with equal readiness rule the hilarious roost in Old Granny Grimmon's little grog shop, or play the gracious host to distinguished visitors from abroad; could spin a yarn, a bit too skittish for mixed company, to two or three old farmers, or acutely argue with the world's most famous diplomats. His greatness was hard to preserve, because it was the greatness of a complex and unsearchable personality.

His appearance, moreover, was so unusual as to defy the cold perpetuity of stone. There was about his features a marked singularity—the large, mobile mouth, the irregular nose, the baggy, wrinkled eyes with their inscrutable gleam—an unmitigated homeliness that cried aloud, not for the chisel of the sculptor, but for the pen of the caricaturist.

Yet despite his unique ugliness, there was a certain indefinable fascination—something at once striking and likeable—in his appearance. He was what Stevenson's stepdaughter would have called "such a nice-looking ugly man." Everywhere he went his figure attracted attention. When he entered a drawing-room ladies would touch their partners with their fans and whisper, "Who is he?" And if the drawing-room were in England they would add, "How like Disraeli!" For the resemblance between these two great men was unmistakable. They were both slightly stooped and both moved with a shuffling, jaunty air that was very

characteristic; they had the same stray lock of hair falling down over the pallid forehead, and visages scarred and furrowed with the same strange lines of thought. In his lifetime Sir John was often mistaken for his notable contemporary; but unfortunately no George Arliss has arisen to keep alive for Canada the personality of her great premier; and his story, so amazing, so racy, so typically Canadian, has remained enshrouded in the colourless winding-cloths of political biography.

John Alexander Macdonald was born in Glasgow in one of a row of stone tenement houses overlooking the Clyde. His father, Hugh Macdonald, was a dealer in cotton; but in 1820, when Johnny was five years old, a business failure brought the family to Canada, here to make, like many others, a fresh start in life. The *Duke of Buckinghamshire*, upon which they crossed the ocean was an old East Indiaman and none too seaworthy (she sank the following year with all hands), and their first experience of the promised land was to run aground in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It was midnight at the time and Johnny was sleeping soundly below while the older passengers, with strangely mixed feelings of sadness and hope, were bravely trying to keep their hearts up by dancing on the dimly lighted decks. Consternation for a while was great; but a passing brig hauled them off, and in due time they arrived at Quebec. From there the Macdonalds immediately went on to Montreal, where they embarked in flat-bottomed boats, and so proceeded up the broad river to Kingston.

In those early days Kingston was the chief town of

Upper Canada. But it must have seemed to these immigrants from thickly populated Glasgow nothing more than a rough pioneer village on the frontiers of civilization. Its population was not over 2,500; its buildings were small and unattractive. Piles of cordwood disfigured even the better front yards, while pigs not uncommonly rambled round the back doors of the poor. In the morning the late sleeper was awakened by the clanking of cowbells; and at night one who visited his neighbour was much troubled to find his way home, with no adequate sidewalks, no street lights, and, after even a light rain, mud to the ankles. Yet here the Macdonalds, doubtless fearing that if they went farther they might fare worse, decided to establish their family hearth. In a building probably on Princess Street, the father opened a general store, and Johnny went to school with his sisters long enough to convince his teacher that he had "a heid on him like a mon." But at the end of five years Hugh Macdonald had met with such meagre success in his business that he gave it up and moved to the country.

On the shore of Hay Bay, an inlet of the picturesque Bay of Quinte, he next tried to mend his broken fortunes. Occupying a plain clapboard house, he divided it into a store and dwelling, and by carrying on a small trade in general merchandise and doing on the side a little farming, he managed to eke out a slender livelihood. The life was one of hardship and privation, but the Macdonalds were no worse off than their neighbours. They even made some pretensions to luxury; for it is said that they possessed the only piano in the neighbour-

hood—a square, tinkly affair on legs as spindly as the legs of a table—upon which the daughters of the house accompanied themselves when they sang the familiar Scottish songs.

The school attended by the Macdonald children (there had been five in the family, three boys and two girls, but the other two boys had died) was three miles away in the village of Adolphustown. It had been erected fifty years before by the original Loyalist settlers, and was a wooden structure not much more than sixteen feet in length. A single desk ran around three sides, which, with the teacher's rough table, a pail of water and a box stove, composed the entire equipment. "Old Hughes," who held sway within its walls, was a stern pedagogue adept at lifting a delinquent boy from his seat with one hand while he thwacked him roundly with the other. Outside the school grew a large oak tree under whose shade the children ate their lunches and upon whose boughs the boys displayed their strength and agility. In such surroundings John Macdonald, a roguish, lanky, barefoot boy, played his pranks and did his sums.

When he had made some advancement in learning, his father, with characteristic Scottish hopefulness for the boy's future, packed him off to the grammar school in Kingston. But altogether John A. Macdonald received no more education than would now see him well through the grades of elementary school.

Apparently his father met with no greater success at Hay Bay than he had at Kingston, for after a few years he moved across the Bay of Quinte and built a grist

mill at the spot under the Lake on the Mountain now known as Glenora. But here again his efforts did not prosper. He was, like so many of our immigrants from the Old Land, a man of fine integrity, but somehow lacking in business acumen. In 1836 he and his family were once more in Kingston, and he was satisfied to accept for the rest of his days the small salary of a clerk in a bank.

At the early age of fifteen John Alexander left school and entered the law office of George Mackenzie in Kingston. Here for six years he studied law. But although he worked hard—much harder than most legal students of the day—he was always ready for any sort of deviltry. "Yes," said an old man, looking back at the Premier's student days, "there wasn't much fun that John A. wasn't up to!" And years afterwards Sir John himself was constantly spinning yarns of the escapades of this period. He used to tell with particular relish of the night when he and several boon companions, returning home late, espied a pile of stones in front of an old man's store. At the suggestion of some limb of Satan amongst their number, probably John A. himself, they threw off their coats and set to work with such good will that later when the old fellow opened his door he found himself staring blankly at a solid stone wall! John A. was always getting into hot water, but somehow he always got out of it; and in 1836, at the age of twenty-one, he was called to the Bar, and opened an office for himself in Kingston.

His career for the next few years was very much that of the usual energetic and capable young lawyer.

When his old principal, George Mackenzie, died he succeeded to most of his business. His wealth increased, and he was able to give his family, whom he had always assisted, more considerable help. His connection at this period with events of historical importance was very slight. It consisted merely in carrying his musket as a humble militiaman in the country's service in 1837, and in acting as attorney for Von Schoultz, the ill-advised Polish gentleman who led the raid across the Canadian border, when he was court-martialed and shot. But it is a remarkable coincidence that two men, Oliver Mowat and Alexander Campbell, who were later to be very prominent in the political life of Canada, entered his office as students.

In 1844 young Macdonald, no more outstanding man being available, was invited by the Conservatives of Kingston to come out as their representative in the forthcoming election. Without hesitation he accepted. A sentence in his reply to the invitation revealed even at that early date the astute, practical temper of his mind. He wrote: "In a young country like Canada, I am of the opinion that it is of more consequence to endeavour to develop its resources and improve its physical advantages than to waste the time of the legislature and the money of the people in fruitless discussions on abstract and theoretical questions of government"—a wise utterance in those days of chaotic politics, when every leader was arguing with ponderous eloquence for his own pet theory of colonial government, and when everybody was giving advice and nobody taking it.

The election which followed lasted, as was the custom, for two days. Whiskey flowed freely; fights were not uncommon; and all the young bloods of the neighbourhood drank and made merry at the candidates' expense. John A.'s supporters, it may be supposed, were not allowed to suffer thirst, for when the ballots were counted it was found that he had been elected by what was for those days the decided majority of 321 votes. In due season, after affectionately bidding farewell to his mother and sister on the dock, he sailed off down the river—a lean, curly-haired, rather theatrical-looking youth in baggy trousers, long tailed coat and loosely knotted tie—to join the older and more august legislators at Montreal.

His early days in parliament were not particularly noteworthy. Living in a single room in a very humble lodging house he entered quietly but energetically into the business of government. He brought in the usual private bills relating to the affairs of his constituency. He served on committees, attended regularly the sittings of the house, and made himself generally useful to his party. Much of his time was spent browsing about the library, poking into this dusty volume and that, storing his mind with all sorts of useful knowledge, and so by omnivorous reading making up for the deficiencies in his early education. He won a place for himself, not by spectacular brilliance or unusual eloquence (he seldom made speeches), but by his comprehensive grasp of affairs and his real capacity for getting things done. His acumen and business ability attracted the attention of the Premier, Mr. Draper, and after only

two years as a private member he was taken into the cabinet as Receiver-General, and almost immediately was given the more important post of Minister of Crown Lands. But the Conservative administration was tottering; and in the election of 1849, although he himself was returned, his party was hopelessly defeated.

It would be impossible in a brief sketch to trace the confused political developments of the succeeding twenty years—the rapid shifting of political parties, the rise and fall of mediocre leaders, the constant strife of rival races and creeds. Upper and Lower Canada, the one vociferously loyal, the other proud and sullen after the recent rebellion, were bravely attempting to travel in double harness. But at any time during the twenty years an outburst of bad temper from either might have resulted in the headlong dash of both over one of a dozen precipices.

During this period Macdonald rose slowly to prominence. "There is no substitute," wrote Walter H. Page, "for common sense;" and with this effective solvent of fanaticism Macdonald was eminently gifted. While George Brown, his lifelong antagonist, was ranting against the French and the Roman Catholics, while other hotheads in the reaction following the Rebellion Losses Bill were forming annexationist societies, while many bitter things were being said on all sides about the Clergy Reserves, he kept his head and went steadily on with his sane policy of construction and conciliation. Slowly he gathered round him a personal following of able men in both Upper and Lower Canada; and when the provinces finally outgrew the inadequate constitution

provided by the Act of Union, as a boy outgrows his short trousers, it was to him that the people looked for leadership in the creation of a bigger and better system of government.

Many famous men played prominent parts in the negotiations leading up to Confederation; but above them all and through them all worked the keen intellect of Macdonald. That sardonic droop to his mouth and that penetrating gleam in his eyes were not accidental. With admirable adroitness he directed conferences, controlled committees, and helped to arouse just the right degree of public enthusiasm. Nothing imposed on him: nothing distracted him. Smaller men with their prejudices and half-formed opinions were like putty in his hands. Men of large capacity were only too glad to follow his sagacious leadership. With astonishing smoothness and rapidity the arrangements were made, the deed was done, and a new nation was created. On the first Dominion Day, July 1, 1867, Lord Monck, the Governor-General, in his distribution of well-earned honours, announced that Macdonald, for his conspicuous share in the work, had been granted the outstanding distinction of being created a K.C.B. And from that time on for many years Canada knew but one really great man, her first premier, Sir John A. Macdonald.

As in the days of chivalry, Sir John with his knighthood won also a fair lady. He had been married before, but his first wife had died after a lingering illness. His second marriage took place in England immediately after the passsing of the British North America Act,

and proved exceedingly fortunate. Only those intimately acquainted with the family really knew how much Lady Macdonald was able to help him in his great task.

In those early days after Confederation the Dominion was like the ship that had not found herself. "It takes more than christenin' to make a ship," declared the old skipper; and it might be said with equal truth that it takes more than an act of parliament to make a nation. As Canada, like a freshly launched vessel, turned her head out into the sea of world affairs, every frame creaked, every deck-beam groaned, every untried spar protested. In no sense was she a nation, but only a conglomeration of separate provinces. Before she should find herself, before her multifarious parts should settle down to their respective duties with faith in themselves and confidence in their neighbours, some rude buffeting was needed, and much gentle guidance under the command of an old salt trained to the sea.

Such an old salt was Sir John A. Macdonald. For twenty-three years he had been out in the storms of parliamentary life; and now for an equal period, interrupted by only one short intermission, he was to walk the bridge of state and control the destinies of the nation.

What Sir John meant to Canada during these years has not yet been fully realized. History recounts his achievements: his conciliation of Joseph Howe, his safeguarding of federal rights against the encroachments of the provinces, his work in instituting a clean and

high judiciary (the act of establishing the court, to be sure, was passed during his temporary eclipse) and the completion of the union by the addition of the North-West Territories and British Columbia. History says a great deal in praise of his extraordinary capacity. It extols the shrewd and skilful diplomacy he displayed in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Washington Treaty; the tenacity and far-sightedness with which he supported the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway; and the unequalled deftness with which he brought into harmony the warring factions of Canada.

And where history leaves off, anecdote takes up the tale. No one has ever had more stories told about him than has Sir John. Anecdotes cling to his memory as burrs cling to homespun. His shrewd insight into the minds of men and his superb tact offer the richest of fields to the raconteur. It is impossible to speak or to write about him without descending to anecdotes, and the genuine story-teller's locker is full of just such stories as the one that follows.

In a certain town of Central Ontario—it was some time in the early seventies—there occurred one of those teacup storms that so often wreck a party's chances in a forthcoming election. Sir John was about to visit the town to rally the Conservative forces as with the beating of a drum, and two local party leaders, both of them old friends of his, both of them able to muster a considerable following, had each claimed that his should be the honour of escorting the "Pry-mier of Canaday" from the station to his hotel. Nothing that the committee could do would persuade them of the

arrant foolishness of their jealousy or show them its disastrous effect upon the party's hopes. At the appointed hour the two rival coaches, both gaily decked with ribbons, were drawn up behind the station, their horses pawing the ground, their drivers eyeing each other vindictively.

The train, as always happens in such circumstances, was an hour or so late. But at last it bustled and puffed up to the station platform. To accommodate the crowds gathering to hear the Premier speak (this was in the early days of the old Toronto and Nipissing Railway) it had been found necessary to use several flat cars boarded up as if for cattle; and from these crude conveyances men, women and children clambered down in the happiest holiday humour. Along with them, instead of from his comfortable coach at the rear of the train, descended Sir John himself, looking very distinguished in tall silk hat and swallow-tailed coat.

"What sort o' cattle are these?" called a wag, pointing to the hot, dusty people emerging from the flat cars.

"Mooleys," retorted Sir John, without a moment's hesitation, "for we'd all be much the better of a horn!"

There followed much handshaking and banter as the visitor recognized old acquaintances; and then came the awkward moment that his supporters had been dreading. Which of the rivals would he favour, which would he choose to offend? Looking thoughtfully over the crowd, Sir John, the most artful of political tacticians, enquired innocently, "Who is the *oldest* Conservative present?" His own keen eye and remarkable memory—he never forgot a face—had already told him the answer.

But amongst the onlookers there was a moment's hesitation. Then as the truth dawned upon them they began to smile and whisper. The oldest Conservative present was undoubtedly John H., who had driven to the station in his dilapidated buckboard behind his old white nag. Grinning with delight, the old fellow stepped forward, assisted the Premier into his humble vehicle, climbed in himself and gathered up the reins. As they drove off the rival equipages fell in behind, and Sir John, looking none too comfortable, with his lean knees projecting above the dashboard, relaxed his features into that matchless smile of his, that ingratiating gleam of mischief which was so characteristic and so infectious. In the laughter that followed, the crisis quickly melted into insignificance.

Adding such glimpses as this to the facts contained in history, we begin to get a fairly comprehensive view of the man. But there is still something missing. To his contemporaries John A. was far more than a distinguished parliamentary leader; more, too, than a skilful politician angling for votes. He signified something to them—they could not have said what. He stirred in them mysterious impulses and emotions—they could not have said why. He fascinated them, dominated them. They regarded him with a reverence that was almost idolatry. No other Canadian has ever equalled his power of evoking deep and constant loyalty. When Donald A. Smith, after declaring his variance with Sir John over the Pacific Railway corruption, returned to Winnipeg for re-election, he was rotten-egged by a body of his constituents, despite

the fact that Donald A., the cautious Scot, was undeniably in the right, while John A., the unscrupulous Scot, was just as undeniably in the wrong. The dominance of Sir John was not a thing of the reason, but of the imagination and the heart. It had all the hidden force of a deep-rooted infatuation.

In idolizing him his countrymen did not forget that he, like Burns, had his feet of clay as well as his head of gold. They knew that his intemperate habits often rendered him for days incapable of public duty; they had heard much gossip of his amorous philanderings in Kingston; and at the time of the Pacific Scandal, when revelations showed that he had accepted large sums of money for electioneering from men about to build the Canadian Pacific Railway, they discovered that in politics he was, to say the least, not squeamish. But they forgave all his faults as they would the shortcomings of a friend, and if the truth must be told, loved him the more because he was something of an old scalawag.

There was a genuine kindliness in the great man's make-up that brought him close to the hearts of the people as no other Canadian has ever been. While many of his colleagues, like some modern members of parliament, were preoccupied with the difficult task of looking important, John A. was busy making friends. Most of those who at one time or another were his enemies—Joseph Howe, D'Arcy McGee, Donald A. Smith—came in the end to be his supporters. Some of his affability was no doubt political expediency. He was an adept at extending the political glad hand—

indeed he went further, for was it not he who looked to heaven as a place where there would be no more babies to kiss? But his cordiality was not all diplomacy. It had in it the authentic note of kindliness. In Colonel Biggar's "Anecdotal Life" one of Macdonald's political opponents relates his experience on returning to parliament after a lengthy illness: "The first man I met on coming back was Blake. He passed me with a single nod. The next man I met was Cartwright, and his greeting was about as cold as that of Blake. Hardly had I passed these men when I met Sir John. He didn't pass me by but grasped me by the hand, gave me a slap on the shoulder, and said, "Davy, old man, I'm glad to see you back. I hope you'll soon be yourself again and live many a day to vote against me!"

But Macdonald's nation-wide dominance cannot be attributed altogether to his affability. Nor can it be explained in the manner so often attempted, as the sway of the great popular orator; for, unlike Howe and Laurier, he was never a great orator. He did not possess that gift of imaginative eloquence, that genius for vivid powerful imagery, which enabled the Nova Scotian to sweep his listeners into such wild enthusiasm; neither had he Laurier's flowing lucidity, his suavity, his unique skill in arguing an audience into sweet reasonableness. Macdonald's manner of delivery, we are told, especially in the House of Commons, was peculiar. He would proceed rapidly, almost in a monotone, for several sentences; and then, suddenly bursting forth with an emphatic word or phrase, would toss back his shaggy massive head and sweep the House with imperious

eyes that commanded attention. Before a popular audience, to be sure, he gained much from his flashes of humour. He had that touch of drollery which makes the whole world kin; and his quick wit was ever ready to turn a chance circumstance to his own advantage. At one of his famous political picnics, so the story goes, an old farmer, becoming deeply interested in what the Premier was saying, shoved his corn-cob pipe into his pocket without properly extinguishing it. In a few moments his coat began to smoke. Sir John stopped. "Excuse me," he said, pointing to the old chap, "but if I don't make you aware of what's happening in your pocket, you'll soon be going where my Grit friends would wish me to go—to blazes!" But despite this happy vein of humour his speeches were not masterpieces of rhetoric. They revealed a large, firm grasp of affairs and an unusual persuasiveness in argument; but they did not achieve that finer potency which comes from a mastery of style. His language, though virile and precise, lacked colour, brilliance, polish. Yet he was always looked on as a great speaker. Wherever he went huge crowds gathered to hear him. His popularity was unexcelled.

An incident revealing his matchless domination over the minds of an audience occurred in Hamilton. A meeting was being held in the old rink, which was crowded to overflowing. Sir John, not so young as he once had been, was having difficulty in making himself heard; when at a critical point in his argument, he was interrupted by a heckler.

"That's a lie!" came the voice distinctly from the hushed assembly.

The old man paused and an added dignity passed into his spare figure as, singling the intruder out with his finger, he declared impressively: "It's true; it can be proved." That was all—no argument, no supporting data, no repartee—only the withering glare in those unsearchable eyes, the unforgettable majesty of those gnarled but venerable features, and the unanswerable logic of that lean, accusing finger. Yet the thousands of onlookers rose as one man and would willingly have cast the offender from a window. Why? Because they felt instinctively that an insult to Sir John was an insult to their country. In some mysterious way the person of this silver-haired old statesman had become identified with the soul of Canada. As he stood there, gaunt and threatening, his figure seemed wrapped about, not only with the splendour of his own achievement, but also with the unspeakable dignity of his country's honour. The flag and Sir John—these two had become the joint emblems of Canada.

Herein rested his power. Canadians of earlier days had looked in vain to their governors for an embodiment of their latent aspirations. Sir Charles Metcalfe, that staunch and admirable example of England's best governing material, they had reviled and ridiculed. Why? Because he had come from abroad to govern them and they had felt that even his self-sacrificing devotion to duty smacked of condescension. Lord Elgin, whose courageous statesmanship was of the sort that has made the British Empire possible, was not fully appreciated by his friends and was insulted and stoned by his enemies. Why? Because he, too,

was an outsider whose very adherence to principle had an aspect of cold aloofness. But John A., in spite of his Scottish birth, was thoroughly Canadian. He had pioneered with the pioneers, and had known all the hardships and privations of penury. He had gone barefoot to the little log schoolhouse; had struggled long and hard for his learning; had fought and skylarked and laboured; and at last, through his own self-reliant efforts, had made his way not only to success but also to the hearts of the Canadian people.

In almost every home throughout the land, hanging conspicuously on the rose-papered wall of that dim, stuffy room where visitors were ushered to view the family album, appeared a gilt-framed steel engraving of Sir John. And as the members of the household, many of them with deep-rooted Old World loyalties, gazed respectfully on his unhandsome physiognomy, they were conscious of a new force working in their blood—the shrewd, staunch, virile force of Canadianism.

And for good or ill his famous National Policy, with its coupling of loyalty to Canada with loyalty to the Empire, and its insistence on a protective tariff, has remained the policy of Canada. Up to the present no political leader has been able to carry the country with him in an attempt to amend its essential principles. Our Dominion is, in short, largely what John A. made it.

When after almost twenty years as Premier he was finally stricken with paralysis, the whole nation, nay the whole Empire, watched by his bedside. The newspapers brought out extras with large headlines giving the latest reports of the Premier's condition. The Queen

herself, out of a very real personal regard, sent kindly messages of enquiry, and when at last the struggle was over, the whole British Commonwealth felt that it had lost a friend.

After his death four prominent Conservatives in succession tried in vain to fill his position as leader. An election loomed up and to bolster the party's failing powers Hugh John Macdonald, the old man's son, was put in the Cabinet as Minister of the Interior. In appearance Hugh John somewhat resembled his father, and a wag declared that the party hoped to "win by a nose." But with the old man gone, the old party quickly crumbled and the task of guiding the nation's destinies fell to the lot of a serious-eyed, eloquent French-Canadian, Wilfrid Laurier.

IX

LORD STRATHCONA

STEVENSON professed a theory that men of high destinies have high-sounding names. In the light of such a theory, what career, we wonder, would he have prophesied for a raw-boned, silent Scottish lad with the unromantic cognomen of Donald Alexander Smith? Had he known that Donald's father was a shop-keeper in a little Highland village, might he not have placed the boy for all his days behind the counter? Or if he had guessed that an enterprising spirit would have drawn the lad to the colonies, might not his prophetic eye have seen over the door of some distant Mariposa hostelry, painted in big black letters, the prosaic information that Don. A. Smith was Prop.? The truth about his contemporary, if he had known it, would have upset his whole theory of high-sounding names. For no man of his time had a higher destiny, a more romantic career, than the late Donald A. Smith, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal.

Lord Strathcona lived three lives: first as a shrewd and hardy representative of the Hudson's Bay Company in the wilds of Labrador; next as the member of parliament from the North-West who did so much through

the promotion of railways and immigration to transform a dreary prairie into one of the granaries of the world; and lastly as the venerable and statesmanlike representative of the Dominion of Canada at the imperial seat of government. Ninety-one years in all—ninety-one years filled with stirring activity and unrelenting purposefulness—a career whose story is the epic of half a continent, a life whose threads are interwoven with the destinies of a whole dominion. "You shake hands with him," wrote Mr. A. G. Gardiner in the latter days of Lord Strathcona's life, "and it is as if you shake hands with a section of the British Empire. You talk with him and it is as if Canada is before you telling her astonishing story."

Donald A. Smith was born in 1820 in the village of Forres, near which Macbeth and Banquo met the witches. As he grew up his imagination was stirred by letters from an uncle fur-trading in Rupert's Land. It was his mother's wish that he should enter the profession of law, and for this he was partly educated; but the lure of the great lone land—the land of campfires and Indians, of muskets, canoes and peltries—had caught his fancy, and his eighteenth year saw him on a creaking, spray-swept clipper ship headed for the North American colonies. It took two months to cross, and when the ship had passed through the fogs of Newfoundland and up the St. Lawrence, he disembarked at Quebec to find the colony in a fever of excitement. Soldiers were marching and drilling in the streets, the air was full of the echoes of wild skirmishes, and excited talk of the "Papineau boys" was on everybody's lips; for the

rebellion of 1837-38 had just been quelled. But undaunted by the general unrest, Smith proceeded to Montreal, where he sought out the offices of the Hudson's Bay Company, and found himself, as he used to tell long afterwards, quickly installed as an apprentice clerk at £20 a year "and all found."

For several years he served the company faithfully at various trading posts along the St. Lawrence River. But one winter, while he was stationed at Tadoussac near the mouth of the Saguenay, he was much troubled with blindness from the glare of the snow. Believing himself threatened with permanent loss of sight, he wrote to the governor of the Company, asking for permission to leave his post and visit a doctor in Montreal. Twice he wrote, but no answer arrived. More and more anxious concerning his eyes, he finally took matters into his own hands and set out for Montreal without permission from his superiors.

When he reported at the Company's headquarters, George Simpson, the governor (he was one of the most bristling, autocratic little czars who ever ruled over a body of men), received him with scant ceremony, had his eyes examined on the spot, and, when no dangerous trouble was revealed, sternly rebuked him for his infringement of the company's strict discipline. As punishment he ordered him within thirty minutes to set out for the company's trading post on the far-away coast of Labrador.

Without a word of protest Smith obeyed. Accompanied by two Indian guides, who proved to be hopelessly incompetent, he plunged into the wilderness.

The journey began in the depth of winter, and continued long into the spring. Several times he and his companions were lost; and often they were at the point of death from cold or hunger. What were the youthful trader's thoughts, we wonder, as he plodded on day after day through endless leagues of waste land, desolate with that awful desolation which has existed since the beginning of the world? What were his feelings when at last, at the ultimate end of his voyaging, he came to the little group of log houses that formed the company's post in the land of his banishment?

Hamilton Inlet, upon which the lonely trading station was situated, is a great gash in the mountainous shores of Labrador. On either side immense hills roll into the distance, barren and forbidding, huge and ominous as the undulations of some planet framed on a vaster scale than ours. Dark, rocky islands wooded with dwarf spruce and stunted alders contrast strangely with the dismal baldness of the mountain-tops. In the immeasurable trough the blue water sleeps, its silence undisturbed except for the wash of long waves straying in from the Arctic Ocean, the cry of wild fowl, or the echoes of some distant howl amongst the hills; while the mists curl and mantle about the ageless cliffs like the exhalations of a frost-bitten giant; and at night, like scenic curtains on an infinite stage, the northern lights hang and ripple and melt, ghostly emanations from the ice-locked regions of the pole.

For many years here Smith performed his labours with that intense devotion to duty and that cautious daring which, when united, make heroism but not

heroics. Few echoes of the restless stirrings of civilization reached him in his remote fastnesses. Only once or twice a year did the mail carrier come trudging in on snow-shoes, bringing to him and his fellows letters and news already several months old. He was seldom permitted to visit the outer world. When he took as wife the daughter of a superior officer, the ceremony, in default of a clergyman, was performed according to the simple rites of Labrador. His days were spent in bartering with the Indians and the Esquimaux, in making lonely voyages along the coast, in acting as practical healer amongst the natives, and in experimenting with the growing of hardy vegetables; and his long, monotonous evenings in the reading of the few books that were available and the writing of voluminous letters home. It was a trying existence, an existence that would have broken the spirit of a weaker man. But Smith came of that staunch Highland stock which never lets go. Year after year he stuck to his work until his faithful merits gained him recognition. The Company directors in their far-away armchairs at length learned that this young trader added to his tenacity the second virtue of the true Scot—he could always show a balance on the right side of the ledger. First he was raised to the rank of chief trader, then to that of chief factor, and finally, in 1868, after thirty years in the wilderness, he was given the high position of governor of the Montreal department, with charge of the whole Labrador peninsula.

Shortly after Donald A. Smith's appointment to this responsible position, he was called upon to perform a most difficult and dangerous task. Arrangements

were at the time being made whereby the newly-created Dominion Government should take over from the Hudson's Bay Company those broad reaches of uncultivated prairie then known as Rupert's Land. The transfer was almost completed when rumours reached Ottawa of disaffection in the Red River settlement. Different men were sent out, amongst them Joseph Howe, to appease the Mètis; but matters only grew worse, until, when McDougall, the newly-appointed Lieutenant-Governnor, tried to enter his future domain he was met by about forty well-armed half-breeds and driven ignominiously back to the American border. So matters stood when Sir John A. Macdonald, the Canadian Premier, sagaciously decided that a respected officer of the Hudson's Bay Company (the Fort Garry factor was ill) would have the best chance of quieting the rebels and restoring order. Donald A. Smith was therefore despatched as Dominion Commissioner to enquire into the causes and extent of the disturbance and to use his best efforts to effect a peaceful settlement.

When the newly-appointed commissioner, after an exhausting journey in the midst of winter by rail, stage and cutter, arrived at Fort Garry, he found things very bad. Even the semblance of legal authority had gone. The company's stores had been entered by armed bands and much valuable merchandise had been stolen; many of the loyal citizens were confined as "political prisoners;" and Louis Riel with about two or three hundred half-breeds and a handful of Irish malcontents was in undisputed control. Smith quietly established himself in one of the Company's offices, only to discover

that he was little better than a prisoner. Although he was permitted to receive visitors, his own freedom was curtailed, and all his efforts towards a peaceful settlement were hampered. Riel tried to inveigle him into giving up his credentials; but was met with the statement that these had been carefully left behind at Pembina. Next he requested a written order for their delivery, but Smith wisely declined to give any such order. In the end, Hardisty, Smith's brother-in-law, who had accompanied him on his mission, was sent for the papers, and although Riel and his associates made treacherous attempts to seize them on the way, they were finally brought safely to Fort Garry.

Next day a meeting was held in the courtyard of the fort for the purpose of hearing these documents read. A more romantic scene could scarcely be imagined. Almost a thousand people were collected in the enclosure —swarthy half-breeds, full-blooded Indians, hardy white settlers—all muffled in their rude but picturesque winter clothing. Some leaned on snowshoes or rifles, others swung their arms vigorously or stamped on the ground to keep warm; for the temperature stood at twenty degrees below zero, and a keen wind was whirling the snow bitingly into their faces. On a platform at one end of the open space were the speakers: a chairman hastily chosen from the audience; the interpreter, Louis Riel himself, a short, thick-set figure whose massive head gained its character from the sallow complexion, the broad cheek-bones and the roving, beady eyes; Donald A. Smith, lean, full-bearded, erect, with a

countenance made intense by the bushy eyebrows that almost met above his nose; and two or three others.

Feeling was intense. At any moment a rash word or a blow might have precipitated bloodshed. Several times Riel tried to impede the reading of the documents. But Smith was shrewd, cautious and cool-headed. At every point he outwitted the dictator, until finally, after five hours of reading and discussion, he produced a gracious telegram from the Queen herself, and the meeting adjourned with cheers.

The following day another session was held, more documents were read, better feeling prevailed, and Riel, apparently won to reason, proposed that a convention of twenty English settlers and twenty French should be appointed to consider Mr. Smith's commission and to decide what would be best for the welfare of the country.

The convention met and continued its deliberations for over three weeks. Smith went into the whole matter of union with the Dominion at some length. His outspoken fairness won the confidence of all but the malcontents, and when at the right point he suggested that they send delegates to Ottawa, his proposal met with general approval.

But Riel, that vain and passionate little Napoleon, was not to be so easily deposed. The success of Smith's quiet diplomacy had infuriated him. After tasting the sweetness of power, he now saw his petty despotism crumbling before his eyes. He ranted; he raged; he threatened "war—war within fifteen days" and "massacre" if he and his "provisional government" were

not recognized. And in the end, for the sake of peace, he had his way. His government, though it was never recognized, was tolerated, and a semblance of peace prevailed. Openly the dictator declared that his only aim was to bring about a just union with the Dominion, but in secret he did all he could to thwart the Commissioner's efforts. So matters went on until Riel, in an attempt, as he said, to make the Canadians respect him, carried out the shooting of one of his prisoners named Thomas Scott.

This brutal execution—it was little else than murder—proved to Smith that things could not be set right by peaceful negotiations. With some difficulty he obtained a passport from Riel, and having returned to Ottawa, recommended that "there should be a strong military force in the North-West as soon as possible." His recommendation was acted upon. But it took the little army that was commissioned several months to organize and many more to hew its way through the pathless forests beyond Lake Superior. Smith, in the meantime, being a private person and so able to travel through the United States, had once more gone west, this time to attend the annual meeting of the Hudson's Bay Company factors at Norway Point on Lake Winnipeg. So it happened that when his business was finished, he was on the ground to meet the expeditionary force when it emerged from the woods, and to accompany it to Fort Garry.

Here the situation was found to be somewhat improved. Riel, an arrant coward in the face of danger, had fled; there was still some sullen discontent manifest

among the half-breeds, but her Majesty's forces were allowed to enter the fort without opposition. When it was clear that no further trouble was to be expected, Smith was called upon, as chief executive of the Hudson's Bay Company, to assume for a time the administration of the settlement's affairs—a duty that he ably performed until the arrival of Mr. Archibald, the new Lieutenant-Governor.

For the next few years Donald A. Smith's career was indentified with the progress of the North-West. His own inclination and the company's welfare induced him to make his home in Manitoba; and when the new territories were fully incorporated in the Dominion of Canada, he was elected as the first member of parliament for Selkirk. In the House of Commons, though his gifts were not especially those of the politician, he was frequently drawn into the limelight because of his intimate knowledge of the West. In those days before the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Manitoba seemed as remote from the older parts of Canada as the Yukon does to-day. Little was known of its possibilities, and curiosity was great. Questions about it were constantly being asked upon the floor of the House, and such questions were all referred to Smith for answer. By his well-informed replies he obtained a considerable reputation as propagandist for his constituency.

But his course was not all fair sailing. He was often called upon in those first years in parliament to defend himself and the Hudson's Bay Company against bitter attacks from certain sections of the legislature. The

company's officials were accused of not having exerted their full influence to subdue the recent unrest—some members even went so far as to accuse them of having incited the trouble—and Smith himself was unjustly blamed for lack of courage and decisiveness in dealing with the rebels. Again and again he answered his opponents with calmness and some spirit. Sir John A. Macdonald, after hearing him in a verbal duel with Dr. Shultz, declared, "He has coolness and resource and plausibility, and just that amount of venom when he is attacked which a good statesman ought to have." And the general opinion was that he had much the better of the argument.

Except for such unimportant bickerings he continued his way in the House of Commons for several years much as any other private member. To the eyes of his fellow-members and lobbyists his erect, spare figure, surmounted by the inevitable grey top hat, became a familiar sight. Too cautious to give himself unreservedly to the domination of any one party, he had nevertheless thrown in his lot with Sir John A. Macdonald, and was known as one of the government supporters. So matters stood when one day the House and the country were thrown into intense excitement by a startling revelation.

At the time—it was in 1874—the country was engrossed with the project of laying a great railway across the continent—a railway that would bind together the far-flung provinces of Canada. After endless negotiations a company headed by Sir Hugh Allan, the shipping magnate, seemed about to undertake the

task of construction, when all was upset by amazing accusations put forth on the floor of the House and in the columns of the Montreal *Herald*. Amongst other damaging evidence published in the *Herald* were certain private letters and telegrams that had lately passed between Sir Hugh Allan and the Premier. These letters unveiled what seemed to be a case of most flagrant corruption. In return for a gift of $100,000 to the Conservative party funds (an election had just been fought), Sir Hugh's company, so the accusation ran, was to receive the charter for building the railway. Later investigations and the Premier's defence showed that the case was not quite so bad as it at first appeared; Macdonald himself was freed from the serious charge of receiving bribes; but it was bad enough. What the result of the disclosures would be nobody could tell. Sir John had weathered other storms—could he weather this?

Eventually the fate of the government seemed to depend on how Donald A. Smith would swing. If he continued to support the Premier, it might still be possible for the administration to pull through. If, on the other hand, he turned against his old leader, others would follow and there was little doubt that the administration would fall. For several days Smith held his peace. His cautious Scottish mind weighed and balanced everything that was said. He listened attentively to the violent utterances of both sides. He pondered over the damaging report of the commission appointed to investigate the scandal. And then, late one evening, when the chamber was flooded with visitors,

he stood up and declared himself. His first words brought cheers from the Conservative benches. He regretted that it had been found necessary to violate the sanctity of private correspondence, and he thought that there could be no valid excuse for the purloining of Sir Hugh Allan's personal letters. When he got this far several government supporters waited for no more. Flinging jeers at their disappointed enemies, they retired to celebrate their supposed victory in convivial rejoicings. But the relief was premature. Donald A. could not condone the breach of the etiquette of private correspondence, but he felt that it was a mild offence in comparison with the great breach of public trust that had been unveiled. And when he concluded with the words, "For the honour of the country no government should exist that has a shadow of suspicion resting upon it, and for that reason I cannot give it my support," every one knew that Sir John A. Macdonald's administration was doomed. A new election was inevitable and the result was beyond doubt.

By this time Donald A. Smith was a wealthy man—just how wealthy few people guessed. From childhood he had been schooled in habits of Scottish thriftiness; and to his thrift he had added the shrewdness needful to detect a sound investment, and the daring necessary to turn his judgment to account. As a factor in Labrador he had put a large part of his savings into Bank of Montreal stock. In those early days this bank was little more than an unimportant loan society; but as years went on it developed into one of the most prosperous financial institutions in the country and Smith

became one of its directors. Another highly profitable investment was in stock of the Hudson's Bay Company. With the transfer of the company's rights in Rupert's Land, there occurred something of a panic amongst Old Country shareholders. The market value of the shares suffered a severe drop. But Smith, being on the ground and knowing how small would be the effect of the transfer on the company's trade, secretly bought up large blocks of stock. When the panic was over and it was discovered that the golden goose had not been killed, he found himself holding a controlling interest in that ancient and profitable corporation.

But his most fortunate venture was, undoubtedly, in the St. Paul and Pacific Railway. This road, financed largely by Dutch shareholders, was one of the bursted bubbles of the seventies. After being launched with the usual *éclat*, it had fallen a prey to mismanagement and fraud, and, with many miles of rail still to be laid, had found itself completely bankrupt. Smith became interested in it through two Canadians living in St. Paul—Norman W. Kittson, who had been a Hudson's Bay agent and was then head of a small steamship line operating on the Red River, and James J. Hill, then a coal and wood dealer of that city, but afterwards the famous railway magnate. These three, all of them possessing an unbounded faith in the West, were fascinated with the possibilities of this moribund and discredited railway. They conceived a daring project for putting it once more on its feet. Long and earnestly they talked over the scheme, until at last, enlisting the support of Smith's cousin, George Stephen, also a director of the Bank of

Montreal, they floated a company that completed the railway and made of it one of the most successful and lucrative lines on the continent. The branch that they induced the Canadian Government to build into Winnipeg was the first railway to tap the Canadian North-West.

It was when the St. Paul and Pacific was first proving its success that Sir John A. Macdonald, having returned to power, set about finding promoters to build his cherished Canadian Pacific Railway. What more natural than that his eye should light on these men who had so unmistakably proven their ability to finance and manage a great railway? For him the one objectionable feature of the group was Smith, the man who had deserted him, had "gone over to the Grits," in those critical days of his fall. But this objection was easily overcome by leaving Smith's name off the directorate. So it happened that, although Smith was one of the chief promoters of that historic enterprise, his name did not appear for a long time as one of the directors. The story of the financial and constructional difficulties overcome in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway is an epic in itself. Again and again the whole scheme was on the verge of collapse through lack of funds. Before it was completed the directors, including Smith, had pledged as security their entire private fortunes. Every possible resource was tapped; every possible device tried to tempt capital. Only the faith of Sir John A. Macdonald and the indomitable tenacity of the directors brought final success. Smith's part in the struggle was so outstanding that Sir Charles Tupper, speaking long

afterwards in London, said: "The Canadian Pacific Railway would have no existence to-day, notwithstanding all that the Government did to support that undertaking, had it not been for the indomitable pluck and energy and determination, both financially and in every other respect, of Sir Donald A. Smith."

The year after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Donald A. Smith was made a knight of the order of St. Michael and St. George; and from then on honours poured in upon him. In 1882 he lost his seat in parliament, but in 1887 at the instigation of Sir John A. Macdonald, with whom he was by that time completely reconciled, he returned as a member for Montreal West. He remained a member until 1896 when, with his appointment as High Commissioner for Canada in London, he entered upon the final phase of his career.

In England Sir Donald's great services to the Empire were further recognized by a peerage and the title of Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal of Glencoe, Argyllshire and Montreal, Canada. With proper dignity he took his seat in the House of Lords, and his tall, spare figure soon became well known in the higher circles of English Society. The simplicity and kindliness of his manner brought him many friends. Queen Victoria bestowed with her own hand one of his titles; and to her successor and his consort he became known as "Uncle Donald." The serious intentness of his eyes, which told so little, but suggested so much, the independent erectness of his frame, the whiteness of his hair, a whiteness as of drifted snow, seemed to the people of England

somehow symbolic of Canada. As they caught glimpses of him going untiringly about his work, their minds were carried away from the Old World atmosphere of London to the vast undeveloped leagues, the inspiriting open spaces of "Our Lady of the Snows."

In Canada he is best remembered, perhaps, for the munificence of his philanthropic gifts. A beautiful free hospital situated on the side of the mountain at Montreal bears constant record to the generosity of Lord Strathcona and his cousin, Lord Mount Stephen—the George Stephen of earlier days. The natives of Labrador had frequent reason to thank the luck that sent to their shores a solemn, angular Scottish youth, for they used to receive from him every year a whole cargo of food and clothing. And every Canadian schoolboy or girl, who goes through the Strathcona drill at ten o'clock in the morning, is carrying out the intention of this notable man in forming the "Strathcona Trust." Universities, too, have benefitted much from his munificence. But it was during the Boer War that he made his most spectacular donation to the Empire. At the beginning of the conflict, when Britain's armies were meeting with heart-breaking reverses, Lord Strathcona's mind travelled back to his Western days. He thought of the North-West Mounted Police, that hardy band of rough riders who kept the prairie in order, and at his own expense enlisted and equipped a similar corps of six hundred mounted rifles, keen shots, born and bred to the saddle, and presented them to the War Office. Few philanthropists of any country have shown a more splendid generosity

than the venerable statesman who created the "Strathcona Horse."

His energies seemed inexhaustible. At the age of ninety he was still hale and hearty, and working from daylight till dark. Like a tall tree that has long survived its contemporaries, he lived on, strangely alone, but indefatigable. Wealth had not developed in him a love of ease, nor had success weakened his moral sinews. Industry, honesty, thrift and perseverance—these were the virtues to which he clung until his death—commonplace virtues that contrasted oddly with the high romance of his destiny, but solid virtues that made of his life the model of a successful career. When asked the secret of success he replied, "Save half of what you earn; look ahead; and hang on—never let go!" Idealists might claim that a finer creed would leave room for that passionate devotion, that "splendid imprudence" that hitches its wagon to a star. But what would become of this old world, if all our great men were to be glorious young enthusiasts battling for unpractical ideals, or irresponsible poets with no thoughts but for the entrancing ecstasies of their own imaginations? To build up the solid dollars-and-cents foundations of our national happiness we must have our quota of the sagacious, hard-working, thrifty Donald A. Smiths. And it is incontestable that his death in 1914 removed one of the pillars of our Empire.

X

FATHER LACOMBE

THE Minister of the Interior, seated in his quiet and dignified office, raised his eyes from his desk to greet a most unusual visitor. Before him, bowing politely and smiling, stood a little priest, whose straight white locks hung down almost to his shoulders and whose black cassock was threadbare and rusty from many months of hard usage. In the staid official atmosphere of this government bureau the visitor's sturdy figure looked oddly out of place. He seemed like a wild duck that has made the mistake of dropping into a city. In one hand he carried his broad flat hat, in the other a shabby but serviceable umbrella, while in his girdle was thrust with obvious pride the sign of his profession—a huge bronze cross bearing the figure of our Saviour. His features, burned a rich brown by long exposure to the sun and wind, were mild and saintly; but his eyes, which were extremely interesting eyes, gleamed with a curious mixture of quick whimsical humour, shrewd practical wisdom and quiet masterfulness. When he spoke it was with a decided French accent.

The Minister listened with due attention to his story.

Certain lands in Calgary, it seemed, had been claimed by him for the Order of Oblates to which he belonged. But troublesome people were making encroachments. There was even danger that his rights might not be respected, and he asked that patents should be granted to settle the matter once and for all. To the Minister's ear this request sounded perfectly reasonable; but no government department should act with improper haste. Such matters called for at least an appearance of investigation. If he would call again, the Minister assured him with marked, official politeness, in two weeks, a month, he might perhaps hope to receive a favourable answer to his request.

But official politeness, no matter how marked it might be, did not at all meet the case. "Non, monsieur," declared the good father blandly but firmly, "I cannot go until I receive that settlement of our land. I came hundreds of miles to you just for this. I will wait here, with your permission. I am used to camping on the prairies, on the floor, anywhere. I will just camp here until I get my papers!" And looking about with approval at the luxurious office, he settled himself comfortably in a chair with the air of one about to stay. His calm insistence was irresistible. For this once red tape was cast to the winds, and the little priest received a guarantee in the Minister's own handwriting that the patents would immediately be forthcoming.

It was thus that Father Lacombe was constantly appearing in the most unexpected places, blowing in with a manner as fresh and invigorating as a breeze

from his own prairies. No one who crossed his path, whether Minister of the Interior or naked savage, ever forgot his unique personality. He was one of the most interesting men that Canada has ever produced. As pious and simple-hearted as Thomas à Kempis, he yet was as deeply human, as intensely individual as any character from Dickens. A true product of Quebec, he possessed in his nature that province's fascinating blend of ancient devoutness and keen practicality.

About a century ago—the exact year was 1827—Albert Lacombe was born in a little frame house in the parish of St. Sulpice. His father was a sturdy *habitant*, devoted to his pipe, his land and his church. His mother, a hard-working, thrifty woman, handsome in a housewifely fashion, was also of *habitant* stock. In her blood was just a dash of Indian strain. Far back in the early days of New France, a French maiden, so the story went, had been stolen from her home by an Indian chief. Living in his wigwam as his wife, she had borne him two sons, one of whom was ancestor of Madame Lacombe.

Albert was brought up to do his full share of the family chores—gathering stones off new land, feeding the pigs, going for the cows, chopping wood, and all the other thousand and one jobs a sturdy boy can find to do about a farm. But although he was willing and industrious, he did not particularly care for the life of the farmer. Especially as he grew up his thoughts began to turn very timidly in another direction. The *curé* of the parish, a penetrating, fatherly man, with a deep interest in his parishioners, observing signs of these half-formed aspirations, offered to help Albert to a higher education

than could be obtained at the parish school. The offer was gladly accepted and Albert spent several years at L'Assomption College. Here his dreams took definite shape and he realized that his life-work was to be done as a minister of the Church. From L'Assomption College, therefore, he passed to the Bishop's palace at Montreal, where he completed his theological studies.

But Albert Lacombe was somehow different from the usual theological student. There was a certain restlessness, a certain intensity in his spirit which made him feel that he could not settle down to the placid life of a village *curé*. "I wanted to make every sacrifice or none—that was my nature," he said years later; and a sermon preached by a missionary from far-away Pembina revealed to him his opportunity. As he sat and listened to the preacher's earnest appeal for help in the work of this remote mission field, a deep resolve took root and blossomed in his mind. He then and there decided to give himself up to the work of salvation amongst the poor Indians and half-breeds who roved upon the Western prairies. This purpose was made known to his superiors, and in due time was held for him the impressive ceremony by which the Roman Catholic Church sends forth its missionaries. Before a great congregation the dignitaries of the Church, kneeling, kissed the feet of Albert Lacombe; and with some trepidation, but deep faith, the young missionary set out upon his devoted errand.

His first charge was a half-breed settlement in the neighbourhood of Pembina. Amongst these simple people he spent two years preaching and teaching.

He lived with them in their humble dwellings; he went with them on their buffalo hunts; he entered sympathetically into all their joys and sorrows. But at the end of the two years he decided that his work could be better accomplished if he joined one of the missionary brotherhoods, and for this purpose he came east.

The following spring he met Bishop Taché from the Red River district and offered him his services. His offer was immediately accepted and the two travelled west together. On their arrival at St. Boniface they found old Bishop Provencher, to whom Bishop Taché was coadjutor, in a great state of perplexity. One of the fathers from Fort Edmonton in the far West had just come in completely exhausted and his colleague was to follow shortly. Would the young priest be willing to undertake this remote and difficult charge? Father Lacombe took a night to decide. He still had to go through the novitiate year required by the Order of Oblates, to which he desired to attach himself, but with such a pressing need calling him, that could wait. Feeling that here was his opportunity to do something of real value for his faith, he gave his consent. In company with a party of Hudson's Bay men he made the long, long journey across the prairie and arrived at Fort Edmonton in the early fall of 1852.

After a winter of comparative comfort spent within the walls of Fort Edmonton, he took up his permanent abode at Lac Ste. Anne, fifty miles north-west of the fort, where a predecessor had founded a mission. It was here that he passed his year of seclusion and prayer before he finally took his vows as an Oblate of St. Mary the

Immaculate. In his missionary work Ste. Anne served as his headquarters, but a large part of each year was taken up with travelling about amongst the half-breeds and Indians.

In these wanderings he suffered many hardships. To accustom himself to the Indian diet was in itself a task. He must school himself to eat repulsive messes prepared by unclean Indian hands—pemmican, which one priest described as "almost as good as a candle," was usually the chief ingredient—and roughly served on pieces of birch bark. And along with the hardships went many dangers. On one occasion he and his faithful servant, Alexis—a devoted French half-breed who followed him like a dog—escaped from a bush fire only by racing to a river and standing for hours in the water, scorched by the flames and blinded by the smoke. At other times they were caught in the awful blizzards that sweep the prairies and were almost frozen to death. Snow blindness they had often to face, and pestilence, and death from starvation or thirst. But Father Lacombe learned to endure it all; and despite the dangers and hardships he loved the work from the bottom of his heart.

His own description of his life amongst the Indians is eloquent of his deep satisfaction: "Seated on the fresh grass, with the vaulted skies sown with stars for our House of Adoration—silence falls. The ravens and the little birds are asleep, but man keeps watch. It is then our songs of good-night are sung to the Great Spirit, and how beautiful seem these hymns of the children of the wilderness! And there amidst them,

happy in his lot, see this man in the *soutane.* How eloquent and fine it seems to him to say to them in their own language, taught by these fierce warriors, 'Go and sleep tranquilly, my children. May the Great Spirit bless you. *Au revoir* till morning.'"

His early missionary work amongst the Indians was confined almost entirely to the Crees, whom he found very ready to accept his teaching. The Blackfeet, on the other hand, who were ancient enemies of the Crees, were much less responsive. Humility was a virtue unknown to them. Boastful and warlike, they roved about, lords of the prairies. Because of their ferocity, the rum served out to them at the early trading posts was diluted four times as much as that served out to the milder Crees, and in trading they were forced to stay outside the stockade, goods being passed out to them through an opening in the gate. No previous missionary had been able to touch their proud and savage hearts; but their very obstinacy was a challenge to Father Lacombe.

A deadly epidemic that broke out amongst this fierce tribe of the plains gave him his opportunity. Suffering and dying from a dreadful scourge, they themselves begged for the little father's assistance. Without a moment's hesitation he went to them, discovered the disease to be virulent scarlet fever, and administered what simple remedies were in his power. He himself fell sick of the fever, but his strong constitution enabled him to fight it successfully, and his courage and kindness left a deep impression on the simple hearts of the savages.

The progress thus made with the Blackfeet suggested the opening of another mission closer to their haunts. When Bishop Taché was on an official visit to the district a site was therefore chosen not far from Fort Edmonton, and under Father Lacombe's direction the new mission of St. Albert was established. In the building up of the settlement he had an excellent opportunity to display the practical side of his nature. Around a small church several half-breeds were induced to make their homes, and with their help Father Lacombe constructed a wooden bridge across the Sturgeon River (it was the first bridge west of the Red River), and a grist mill. This mill was the pride of his heart. Such a thing was unheard of in that part of the country; he himself had no previous experience with grist mills; yet by ingenuity and persistence he contrived to produce a mill, operated by either horses or oxen, that successfully served the little community for years.

It was at about this time, too, that he opened a school in Fort Edmonton for the children of the neighbourhood. This school in itself was enough to bring his name within the pages of history, for it was the first school in the far West.

With his headquarters at St. Albert, Father Lacombe continued his missionary excursions. A good beginning had been made with the Blackfeet, but the strictness of the Christian rules of life proved for them a serious stumbling block. These fierce warriors were willing enough to accept the priest's ministrations in times of sickness, but they were not nearly so willing to be guided by his austere advice. Christian marriage, for instance,

was a great difficulty. The chief was as proud of his several wives, any one of whom he could turn away at pleasure, as he was of any other possession. To wed one woman only and to cleave to her until death did them part was something for which he did not at all see the necessity. Father Lacombe, with that touch of whimsical humour which made his talk so fascinating, told his biographer of one experience. After much effort he had persuaded a certain convert to marry according to Christian rites the woman who had been his help-meet for several years. On the appointed day William and Margaret—the English names the pair had assumed —together with two witnesses, stood before Father Lacombe in front of his wigwam, ready to undergo the ordeal.

"At last," says Father Lacombe, "I said, 'William, do you take this woman, Margaret, to be your wife for ever?' and oh, that sound so terrible—you cannot know how, in the ears of the Indian man.

"He say quickly to me: 'Stop Father, that's all fine for you to say those words, for you will not have the trouble with her. That's all fine that you push me so for marry her; but if she gives me so much trouble all these years when she know I can put her away at any time, what will she do when she know I cannot put her away?'

"I tol' him that she would be a good Christian wife as she had just promise, and will give him no trouble. But he talk on, and as I wait I get cross, myself, and I say sternly to her, 'Well, Margaret, you go leave him. You must separate then. You leave him to make his

own moccasins, to cook his meals, to pound his pemmican. Yes, Margaret, you go!'

"William softened, as I knew he would, at that thought of separation, for Margaret was a smart, good woman, and he say quickly again, 'No, I do not want that. I have said I will marry her and I will. But I want to speak my mind first about what trouble she may make for me.' "

So the ceremony went on. And Father Lacombe was always happy to observe that William and Margaret lived together as contentedly as before, despite the fact that they were united in the awful bonds of matrimony,

By deep human insight coupled with ingenuity and devotion Father Lacombe won his way to the hearts of the proud Blackfeet. Every opportunity of gaining their favour he eagerly grasped. Time and time again, in war and in sickness, he earned their gratitude; but unlike the Crees they were of an enquiring turn of mind and sought proof of his doctrines.

His manner of meeting their doubts showed further the curious ingenuity of the man. One day while in a Blackfoot village he retired to a quiet spot on the bank of the Bow River to meditate and pray. Two of the Indians followed him.

"What do you want?" he demanded of them with just a touch of petulance.

"We watch you pray. Are you praying for us?"

"Yes, for all your people," he replied.

They seemed puzzled, and sitting down beside the river questioned him closely about this strange new

faith he was trying to teach them. When he saw that their purpose was not mischief but real curiosity, he eagerly answered their questions, illustrating his words with crude drawings in the sand. The Trinity was symbolized by a triangle surrounded by a circle—which showed that the Deity revealed itself to mankind in three phases yet was eternally self-contained—and so on through the whole story of the Scriptures.

So attentively did the two savages study these rough sketches that the idea of always using pictures to elucidate his teaching occurred to Father Lacombe. On the first opportunity he therefore made with a piece of charcoal and a buffalo hide a more elaborate series of drawings, which he hung up before his tent. This rough chart formed the basis of his famous "ladder"—a simple but complete pictorial history of the Bible. It was reproduced in striking colours later by the Sisters of a convent in Quebec, and thousands of copies were printed and distributed through the West. No better means could have been devised of satisfying the enquiries of the childlike Indian mind.

Little by little his influence with the Indians grew, until at last he became as one of themselves. He loved them, and they loved him. To the Crees he became known as *Ka-migo-atchakim* (the Man of the Beautiful Soul), and to the Blackfeet as *Arsous-kitsi-rarpi* (the Man of the Good Heart). When a small-pox epidemic broke out amongst them, so devastating that whole villages were wiped out and it was impossible to find enough well men to bury the dead, he was their faithful physician, nurse and spiritual comforter. Their adoration

of him increased until he was almost a king amongst them. He settled their disputes; he taught them how to live; he made peace for them with the government of the white people. When Riel for the second time led his half-breeds in rebellion, it was almost entirely Father Lacombe's influence that kept the Indians neutral. No finer tribute to the missionary's work could be given than the words of the Blackfoot chief, Poundmaker, when with some of his fellows he was taken on a tour of eastern Canada as a reward for loyalty during the rebellion. Speaking in Ottawa through an interpreter, the handsome, bronzed old chieftain said: "This man, *Arsous-kitsi-rarpi*, is our brother—not only our father, as the white people call him—but our brother. He is one of our people. When we weep he is sad with us; when we laugh he laughs with us. We love him. He is our brother."

But Father Lacombe's work, especially as he grew older, was not confined to his Indians. With his quaint humour, his agility of mind, and the lovable simplicity of his nature, he became invaluable to his Bishop as a delegate on all sorts of difficult and important missions. When it was suggested that supplies might be brought into the mission by way of the Mississippi Valley, it was Father Lacombe who was sent down the great river to investigate; when France was forced by the disastrous Prussian War to withdraw her generous assistance from Canada's western missions, it was Father Lacombe who must travel through Quebec begging for fuller support from the Canadian Church; when Bishop Taché was fighting hard for the continuation of separate schools

in Manitoba, it was Father Lacombe who must go to Ottawa to beard the politicians in their den. Almost every year, and sometimes two or three times a year, he would be away from his dear Indians on some diplomatic errand. Yet even on the most delicate mission he was never too preoccupied to do some kindness for his friends or converts. Whenever he would set out on the long trail to the East, he would be loaded down with commissions—to deliver a letter to this one and a gift to that, to see how so-and-so's boy was getting on at school or to enquire after the welfare of someone else's parents—and he never returned without a Santa Claus pack of gifts. For the mission at Banff he might bring a bell, for Father Leduc and his Indians a magic lantern with New Testament pictures; while for Father Legal, his very dear colleague, he on one occasion returned with a record assortment consisting of a new saddle, a washing machine, four volumes of the History of the Church and an alarm clock!

Thus the sturdy little figure in the rusty black cassock became familiar in many parishes of Quebec and even of the United States; and as his fame grew his wanderings took him even farther afield. Several times he visited Europe and his reminiscences of these journeys are most entertaining. One smiles at his ingenuous outlook on the civilized world, while surrendering to the charm of his fresh and unaffected observations. The English he liked very much, for he was able to travel from Portland to Dover in his priestly robes without once being ridiculed or insulted. The manners of these islanders he hints are almost as good as those of his

own Indians! While in England he was also very much pleased at being presented to Cardinal (then Archbishop) Manning, with whom he talked for a whole delightful afternoon. Their conversation turned on their "separated brethren." The Archbishop urged him to love these unfortunate people and to pray for them, for "I was one of them once," said he, "and I know how they believe in their souls that they are right; so there is no blame for them that they do not see the truth."

"Of course I have pray for them before; but—" added Father Lacombe when telling of it afterwards, "that was the first time I truly understand the Protestants, and I begin to love them—not only a few like Mr. Christie and Mr. Hardisty, my good friends—to pity them and pray for them, because I love them."

On his various voyages he visited many countries: France, where he was most hospitably entertained; Germany, where his frankness almost got him into trouble; Austria-Hungary, where he was presented to Franz Josef, that sad old man broken down with the perplexities and cares of his great Empire; Italy, where he had audience with the pope, to whom he gave a copy of a Cree dictionary he had prepared. But all the time he longed to be back amongst his Indians. Although he made friends wherever he went, his loneliness almost made him lose his appetite; and none of the luxurious mansions he visited could compare in his regard with his humble dwelling on his own beautiful prairies. "I am writing you to-day," he said in one letter, "from a nobleman's palace, but it is not as

priceless as my *poetique* tent in the wilderness where I write on my knees my sermons in Cree and Blackfeet."

During the latter part of his life he held various charges in the West. For a while he was *curé* of St. Paul's in Winnipeg, at that time a little log building in a half-breed settlement. With the incoming of the Canadian Pacific Railway the town was completely transformed; but Father Lacombe did not remain in this charge long enough to witness its amazing development; for when the railway was being built he was persuaded to act as chaplain of the construction camps. Later still he was appointed *curé* of St Mary's in Calgary.

It was while he was in Calgary that the first Canadian Pacific Railway train arrived. To celebrate the occasion a banquet was given on one of the cars and Father Lacombe was invited to attend. During the course of the dinner a ceremony took place which amused and delighted the old priest. The President of the new railway, William Van Horne, resigned from his position, and with speeches and applause Father Lacombe was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy. Not to be outdone in graciousness, he in turn nominated the ex-railway president as *curé* of St. Mary's! And for an hour each enjoyed his unaccustomed honour.

Varied as were Father Lacombe's curacies, however, his heart was always with the poor natives of the plains, his Indians and his half-breeds, and his head was always full of schemes to promote their welfare. "For I am a man of plans," he said of himself, and his whole life had borne out his assertion. As he advanced in years he had a lonely house built for himself in the foothills of

the mountains, and, much to the amusement of his friends, who knew his restless disposition, declared that he was going to lead the life of a hermit. From time to time he would retire to his hermitage, firmly resolved to remain there for the rest of his days; but some new scheme would ferment in his brain and he would be off to the East, persuading, organizing, canvassing. He was a moving spirit in the institution and management of the Indian Industrial Schools; but the greatest, though not the most successful of his undertakings was, perhaps, the founding of his settlement for half-breeds. He saw these poor people being downtrodden and demoralized in the big cities to which they were drifting and he thought how fine it would be if they could be assisted to establish themselves in one great community on the open and healthful prairie. To carry out this project he schemed and worked assiduously. The Government was induced to give lands and money, and many of Father Lacombe's wealthy friends (he seemed to know everybody) were persuaded to contribute. But even his energy and enterprise did not succeed in providing for the needs of the community. Although many settlers were brought out and much good was done, in the end the scheme had to be abandoned.

The final project of Father Lacombe's life had long been harboured in his mind as a dream. For years he had been looking forward to the establishment of a home for the aged and infirm; and the fulfilment of this dream was eminently successful. Lord Strathcona, who loved the old man and admired him tremendously, himself gave $10,000. Other friends were almost as

liberal. The home was built and in its quiet cloisters its originator passed his declining years.

What memories must have been his as he meditated and prayed in this house of his own conception! In his lifetime he had witnessed the complete transformation of the West. When he had first journeyed to distant Fort Edmonton, he had trekked across a wild and pathless prairie, haunted by buffalo and coyotes, and lorded over by the Indians and the fur-traders. He had seen the coming of the red-coated Mounted Police with their insistence on the white man's law; he had watched the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway with its amazing development of the whole vast region. "Hah!" he said himself, "I would look long in silence at that road coming on, like a flock of wild geese in the sky, cutting its way through the prairie; opening up the great country we thought would be ours for years. Like a vision I see it driving my poor Indians before it, and spreading out behind it the farms, the towns and cities you see to-day." And Father Lacombe's death in 1916, at the time scarcely noticed amongst the anxieties and turmoils of war, marked as perhaps nothing else the complete ebbing of the old era in the overwhelming flood of the new.

XI

DR. LOUIS HONORÉ FRÉCHETTE

ON AUGUST 5th, 1880, there happened in Paris an event of considerable importance in the literary annals of Canada. The scene was a hushed, but crowded hall in the Palais Mazarin; the occasion was the annual public session of the French Academy. Most of the notable scientists and *litterateurs* of France were gathered for the distribution of well-earned honours in the various branches of scholarship.

In an effective and highly complimentary speech the secretary, M. Camille Doucet, announced the awarding of one of the prizes to the writer of a small book of verses entitled "Le Fleurs Boreales." To many of those present the award came as a surprise. The author was not a native Frenchman. The little volume had been published in a far-away land and only a few copies had been circulated in France. But when the secretary pointed out in the course of his speech that the book had been produced by a French-Canadian and was an indication that the spirit of literary France was being perpetuated on the banks of the St. Lawrence, the applause was loud and spontaneous. To the author, Louis Honoré Fréchette, who was present to receive

the prize in person, the occasion must have been one of intense gratification. It was the first time that such an honour had ever been bestowed on a Canadian.

In English-speaking Canada the greatness of this distinction has not been sufficiently recognized. The difficulty of language has made it impossible for those not conversant with French to enjoy the charm of Dr. Fréchette's poetry. But it seems deplorable that outside of his own province so little is known of this eminent Canadian. We may never be able to read his work with the appreciation that it deserves, but we owe it to our national self-respect to know who Dr. Fréchette was and at least something of the nature of his literary achievement.

In the little town of Lévis, which looks across the broad St. Lawrence at the picturesque and heroic city of Quebec, Louis Honoré Fréchette was born on November 16th, 1839. Of his boyhood little is known. His mother died when he was thirteen years of age, and the entry of a rather dictatorial stepmother into the home brought out in the boy a certain spirit of revolt that was to characterize his early career. He was always large for his age, and resented the assumption of maternal authority on the part of one who was not his own mother. After considerable friction the situation became intolerable to his impatient nature, and, gathering up his few possessions, he ran away to the United States. In Ogdensburg, on the south shore of the upper St. Lawrence, he attempted to find employment. In this, however, his youth and his ignorance of any trade proved serious handicaps. He first tried telegraphy

without success, and finally descended to breaking stones along the road. But already the reading of poetry had stirred strange emotions in his heart, had awakened vague aspirations in his mind, and he realized that he was not fulfilling his destiny by breaking stones. He thought the matter over carefully and, putting his pride in his pocket, went back to his parents and begged their forgiveness.

After his return home he was sent to school in Quebec. In this old historic city amid scenes which, although familiar to him, must have stirred his imagination with dreams of ancient romance, he pursued his classical studies. But he does not seem ever to have been a studious boy. Like many other youths whose dreaming souls have caught glimpses of the fugitive charms of poetry, he found the routine tasks of learning rather irksome. His mind was sensitive and quick, but he was given to desultory habits of study. Even in composition he was a mediocre student. He did not, it is true, lag behind his fellows, but he failed to achieve any success that gave promise of a brilliant career. At length, however, he graduated from his first school, the Séminaire de Québec, to pursue wider studies in the Nicolet Seminary.

It was at this academy that he is said to have first blossomed out as a poet. The story runs that around Easter time one year the teacher of rhetoric assigned as a theme the drama of the Resurrection. Much to his surprise he received from Louis Fréchette, not an essay in school-boy prose, but a highly finished poetical narrative. He read it eagerly and, with the schoolmaster's enthusiasm for the achievements of his students,

proclaimed that another poet had been found. Whether the story is true or false, the fact remains that several years later a poem on the subject of the Resurrection was included in Fréchette's first volume of poetry. Its production at school, however, was not in any way remarkable. He was twenty-three years of age at the time and consequently cannot be looked on as a youthful prodigy. But the poem revealed the fact that he was a young man of considerable talent.

When he had finished his academic course, it was necessary for him to choose a profession. Poetry would have been his chosen field of work, but poetry does not make a living; and, moreover, his later history shows him to have had other interests. Like many other brilliant young men of Quebec, he seems to have had a political bent. At any rate he turned to the profession of law—a profession that is often looked upon as a stepping-stone to politics—and after passing through the regular law course, he opened an office for himself in his native town.

His life in Lévis does not appear to have been remarkably prosperous. Lawyers, like prophets, are usually not fully appreciated in their native towns. Fréchette was no exception; but unlike most young lawyers, he was also a poet. He had very few clients, but his enforced idleness, although it did not bring him material prosperity, did help to produce the first fruit of his imagination. He published at this period a thin volume of very creditable lyrics entitled, perhaps in irony, "Mes Loisirs"—"My Leisure Moments." His talent for writing drew him also into journalism.

As a means of supplementing his income from the practice of law, he became editor of a small newspaper called *Le Journal de Lévis*.

This early venture into journalism was of short duration. Always strongly liberal in his views, he used the columns of the newspaper to criticize rather sweepingly established institutions and established leaders in Church and State. He was young, and youth is proverbially impulsive and outspoken. Somewhat injudicious in his attacks, he stirred up powerful antagonisms. The proprietor of the paper, fearful for its welfare (at that time newspapers in Quebec had been known to die as a result of clerical displeasure) considered it wise to ask for the resignation of his too-radical editor.

Fréchette, feeling in his youthful soul that he was launching a crusade for liberalism and enlightenment, bitterly resented this heartless suppression. He was indignant and inconsolable. His legal abilities were being starved; his literary offering had been received with little enthusiasm; and now his career in journalism was nipped in the bud. He felt that his native land did not appreciate him. It was again a case of the cruel stepmother, and, with his heart full of rancour, he once more forsook his home and his friends and betook himself across the border.

This time he went to Chicago, where he earned his living in various ways. For a while he was editor of a small French-American newspaper, *L'Amérique*, and later we find him in the employ of the Illinois Central Railway. Shortly after he arrived in Chicago he gave

vent to his bitterness against his supposed enemies in Quebec by publishing a small volume of poetic invective called "La Voix d'un Exilé." This book is now a curiosity of the bibliophile; very little is remembered about it except the name; but at the time it came out it made rather a sensation. Attacking as it did various leaders of the governing party in Quebec, it was received with open joy by the young Liberals, many of whom were as hot-headed and intolerant as the author himself. Those were the days when Liberalism in Quebec was just becoming a force to be reckoned with, the days before such leaders as Wilfrid Laurier had arisen to give it sanity and breadth of outlook. The best critics of Fréchette's work regard this vituperative booklet as a youthful error of judgment, but there is no doubt that its very extravagance directed attention to the poetic exile, and laid the foundation for his future popularity.

This outburst of wrath seems to have been rather typical of Fréchette's temper at this stage of his life. Later he developed into a staid and sensible father of a family; but in his young days he was full of Celtic heat and hastiness of spirit. Two stories are told of this period which show him as not at all the delicate, æsthetic type of poetic genius. The first episode occurred in Chicago. It was at the time of the Franco-Prussian War. Fréchette and a compatriot, hastening regularly to the bulletin board to gather the latest news of the progress of the war, were offended at the open exultation of certain Germans, who also came every day for the same purpose. The two Frenchmen finally could restrain themselves no longer. High words gave place

to blows, and Fréchette, a big muscular man, with his companion's help soon reduced their enemies to a less exultant frame of mind; and from that day on the French cause was treated with a little more respect before that particular bulletin board. The second episode happened in New Orleans, whither business had called Fréchette. During the siege of Paris he was one night at the theatre, when his racial pride was again offended by the insulting remarks of a German near by. He challenged the fellow to a duel, and was himself wounded in the encounter.

For several years Fréchette remained in the United States. He liked the Americans and the whole up-and-doing atmosphere of the American republic; but, like most French-Canadians, he could not live happily away from home. Urged by his friends in Quebec and by his family, he returned in 1871, and once more opened his law office in Lévis. And from this time on his life was one of peaceful and dignified citizenship. He forgot the real or fancied injuries of his earlier days, reconciled himself with the clerical party, married an attractive French-Canadian girl named Emma Beaudry, and settled down to a life of contentment.

Always his heart had been divided between the gentle, sweet-voiced muse of poetry and the more strident muse of politics. When he returned to Lévis from the United States a federal election was impending. He ran as Liberal candidate, and again in a subsequent election which took place the following year; but he did not succeed in having himself returned to Parliament until 1874, when the landslide that followed the Pacific

Scandal gave the Liberal party four years of grace. But Sir John A. Macdonald's grip had been only loosened, not broken. At the next election the Liberals, and with them Fréchette, were hopelessly defeated. The poet-lawyer stood once more in 1882, but, completely discouraged by another defeat, he ceased to pay court to the political muse and devoted himself to literature.

For some time his work had been appearing in newspapers and magazines. Although poetry was his chosen art, he also engaged in the writing of prose. In the more workaday craft, however, he was not quite at home. His short stories, of which a few are to be found in current magazines, are in the sentimental, almost melodramatic, style popular at the time, and are not in any way outstanding; and his other prose works, whether historical or political, tend to be rather thin and superficial. But in verse he expressed himself with great ease and spontaneity. He was a man of deep and genuine feeling and his emotions readily found vent in words. While he was still a member of the House of Commons, he collected and published a third small volume of poems under the title of "Pêle-Mêle." A little later this collection was incorporated in a larger and more pretentious volume under the name of "Les Fleurs Boreales et Les Oiseaux de Neige." Only thirty copies of this collection at first appeared, but it was fortunate enough to gain the attention of the French Academy. It was on its merits that Fréchette won the coveted honour of being crowned by that august assembly, upon which a larger edition was published in Paris.

With this recognition of his poetic gifts he took the position, which he has since occupied in French-Canadian letters, as the most outstanding poet of Quebec. Perhaps in recognition of this position, he received the appointment of Clerk of the Legislature, a post which insured him a fair income and gave him leisure to cultivate his literary talents. His next volume of poetry was greeted with great acclaim. It was a collection of poetic narratives dealing with the history of the French people in Canada to which he gave the title "Les Legendes d'un Peuple." This volume did more than anything else to establish his reputation. It might be said to have gained that unusual honour in poetry—a popular success. From the time of its appearance Fréchette's work was not only published—it was read.

Any exhaustive attempt at a valuation of Fréchette's work would be quite out of place here. For those who read French easily and who may wish to enrich themselves by a careful study of his poetry there exists M. Henri d'Arles' appreciative and capable monograph in the "Makers of Canadian Literature" series. Sufficient for the purpose of this sketch will be a brief résumé of the accepted views of his work.

It is generally agreed amongst Fréchette's critics that his special gift was for lyric poetry. In "Les Legendes d'un Peuple" he frequently achieves considerable vividness and dramatic vigour in historic narrative, but even in such poems it is when he launches into an expression of his own feelings that he is most effective, that he is most himself. He wrote with telling

spontaneity and real charm of the beauties of nature—of spring, of summer, of autumn, of winter, and of the loveliness of rivers and woods. We find him describing the Canadian forest under the spell of Indian summer—the deep, clear pools, the startled deer, the cry of the wild bird echoing through the solitudes, and the sweet golden sunlight falling softly on the yellow leaves and gilding the lichens and moss that grow about the tall tree trunks. And again he is picturing the wild rapid that plunges and rears like a fretted horse, and rushes in a cloud of mist headlong down the rocky gorge.

Love, the favourite theme of more ardent poets, he scarcely touches; but friendship, and the joys of remembrance and meditation, he beautifully expresses. In a few verses, for instance, he addresses his bouquet, this handful of poor faded flowers, which he has treasured for the perfume of the hand that gave them, these roses which he has watered with his tears, but whose radiant freshness, alas! he has not been able to restore. He succeeds, indeed, in striking a very fine vein of sentiment—a little exalted, sometimes a trifle rhetorical—but always with a touch of real feeling that saves his verses from emptiness.

Even the patriotic note, which so often tempts lesser poets into mere bombast, he can evoke with deep and genuine emotion. In "Les Legendes d'un Peuple" he again and again expresses with ringing clearness and admirable power the French-Canadian's feeling of loyalty—that love of race which endures after a century and a half of separation from France, and is still mingled with a feeling of bitterness against France for her

ancient desertion of her colony. "We are French," he says, "in spite of France." Yet along with his strong racial loyalty, Fréchette had a very real friendship for British traditions and the British people. The enemies of yesterday, he asserts, are the friends of to-day; and he hopes for a closer fraternity between French and English in a greater and more prosperous Dominion. Although his work is so little known amongst his English-speaking fellow-countrymen, one of his patriotic poems, perhaps because of its exquisite expression of the French-Canadian's loyalty, has attained a wide popularity. A translation of this poem is well worth giving:

The Flag of England

"Behold! my son," my father cried,
"Yon banner borne so gallantly;
Beneath its folds sit side by side
Rich Commerce and fair Liberty.

"It is proud England's stainless flag,
And under Heaven's vaulting arch
To the earth's last edge it does command
Great Freedom's high and glorious march.

"On every shore a sun it glows;
O'er savage seas and forests rude
The rays of progress wide it throws,
Whose light makes glad the solitude.

"Where'er it sets its proud impress,
There law and ordered peace do reign;
And barbarous people learn to bless
The civil bond that is no chain.

"That glorious standard of renown
Our banner ages long defied,
Disputing for the victor's crown
With its one foe of equal pride.

"In many a distant land they met,
On many a field, as rose the sun;
And none knew till the sun was set
Which should acclaim the victory won.

"Then came at last that day of fate,
When wavering fortune left our cause;
And down from o'er our conquered gate
Our honoured banner lowered was.

"But though the stranger's ensign now
Upon our walls floats haughtily,
We should remember, I and thou,
It guards a land and people free.

"What though injustice has been wrought,
Whose bitter memory lingers yet!
Long years the conqueror has sought
To make us all our wrongs forget.

"Forget then, son, the stormy days,
And let us our allegiance plight
To yon proud flag, whose colours blaze
Above us, Freedom's beacon light."

"But, father, must we never give
Our own dear emblem loyalty?"
"Ah, yes! my child, while we shall live
That flag we'll kiss on bended knee!"

For many years Dr. Fréchette was a well-loved

figure in French-Canadian literary circles. His friendships were many and were very sincere. Henry Drummond, the poet of the *habitant*, was well known to him—it was Fréchette, indeed, who wrote the introduction for the collected edition of Drummond's poems. He associated himself closely with younger men who were striving for literary expression, and he was always willing to give them advice or assistance. When a group of youthful writers formed an "*Ecole Littêraire*" in Montreal, Fréchette was chosen as honorary president. Even his death was made beautiful by friendship. After spending an evening in the spring of 1908 very pleasantly at the home of an old and very dear friend, he was suddenly overtaken by death. It was, in fact, while he was returning home, with a bunch of flowers which his friend had given him, that he suffered the attack which brought to an end his long and honoured career.

XII

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

IT WAS late on the night of March 16, 1886. The House of Commons was fatigued, as only a jaded House of Commons can be, by a long drawn out battle of invective, denunciation, abuse. Riel had at last been hanged; but the bitterness he had evoked was living after him. An aggressive opposition, quick to take advantage of any trace of official injustice or neglect, had launched a furious attack against the Government for its treatment of the rebel half-breeds. The supporters of the administration had responded in kind. For several unbroken hours the exchange of party recrimination had continued; until finally, through pure weariness, there had come a pause.

The House was almost empty. The faithful few who remained were yawning and looking sadly at the clock. The Speaker was about to put the question; when there arose from the Opposition benches a prominent young French-Canadian.

The truant members, hearing that he was up, stole hurriedly back to their places and their shuffling quickly subsided into attentive silence. The speaker's appearance alone, as he stood there in a setting of thoughtful

faces, was arresting to a degree. Tall, slight, pale, with clear, earnest eyes and silken hair that flowed gracefully back from his broad forehead, he possessed unmistakably that charm, so hard to define, so easy to detect, which we call personal distinction. Although his native tongue was French, he spoke in English. His gestures were at once restrained and forceful. And his voice, carrying in its crisp staccato utterance a suggestion of the advocate, was beautifully clear and resonant, and responded readily to the quick changes in his mood.

For two hours he spoke, and even the weariest member listened eagerly. In burning words he accused the government of shamefully ignoring the half-breed's undeniable rights. "What is hateful," he declared, "is not rebellion, but the despotism which induces rebellion." Such a speech, it was generally agreed, had never before been heard in the House of Commons. Next day a member of the Cabinet—that Cabinet which had been so eloquently assailed—described it as "a speech of which, although I differ from him altogether, I as a Canadian am justly proud, because I think it is a matter of common pride to us that any man in Canada can make on the floor of parliament such a speech as we listened to last night." And the newspapers throughout the Dominion for the first time united in calling this orator "the silver-tongued Laurier."

This man, who could so readily elevate the tone of debate from the depths of party squabbling to the heights of emotion and reason, was born in 1841 in the little French-Canadian village of St. Lin, a few miles

north of Montreal. St. Lin is one of those picturesque and peaceful little towns so typical of the province of Quebec. Away from the stir of commerce and large events, it sleeps, with its soft-foliaged maple trees, its aspiring church tower, its plain, old-fashioned buildings, on the banks of the River Achigan.

The facts of Laurier's boyhood in this remote village may be very briefly told. They are neither extraordinary nor thrilling. His father, Carolus Laurier, was a humble sort of land surveyor by profession, not a well-off man, but shrewd and frugal—an excellent example of the best *habitant* stock; his mother, from whom he probably inherited his talents and his delicate health, died when he was four. It was not long, however, until his father married again, and such glimpses as we have of the family life show us that this second marriage contradicted all the unpleasant traditions of folk-lore and fairy tale. Wilfrid's stepmother was not jealous; she was not cruel; but was as simple-hearted and kindly a woman as one could wish to find. The boy loved her as if she been his own mother, and even after he had grown up and had become engrossed in public affairs, he always found time to pay her a visit at least once a year. Wilfrid had one sister, who died when she was quite young, and four half-brothers and one half-sister, who all grew up and became well-to-do, though not celebrated citizens.

In St. Lin the boy went to school until he was ten, when his father, wishing him to pick up a little English, sent him for a year to the neighbouring village of New Glasgow, where English was spoken.

This first year away from home, spent amongst strange people in what must have seemed a foreign land, made a deep and lasting impression on Laurier's mind. Long afterwards he would recall, with the grown man's pride in the escapades of his boyhood, his many fights with the sturdier lads of the village; and he never forgot the Murrays, a Scottish family with whom he formed a remarkable friendship. The Murrays kept a small general store. After school or on holidays he used often to busy himself behind the counter selling, with profound seriousness in his self-imposed task, such homely commodities as boots, sugar and sticky fly-paper. And once, when the Irish Catholic family with whom he boarded was quarantined, he took refuge with his Protestant friends. The Murrays were strict Presbyterians. Every evening they held family worship. They naturally thought that their young visitor, being a Catholic, would not join them. But he preferred to be as one of the family, and night after night he followed wonderingly the stern old Scot in his prayers and solemn Bible readings.

In this way the boy, who was later to do so much to soften the racial and religious antipathies of Canada, learned the useful lesson of tolerance. He himself said that this experience convinced him that a Protestant could be "an earnest, true Christian, as well as a Catholic."

Deep as was the influence of this period upon Laurier's life, it accounted for very little advancement in learning. The foundations of his culture were laid not in New Glasgow, but at L'Assomption College in

the town of L'Assomption, twenty miles east of St. Lin. Here he spent seven years of rigorous, but enjoyable, activity—years lean in events, but rich in the harvest of knowledge. The descriptions we have of him at this period picture him as a serious-minded boy, loving his books, but devoted, in so far as his frail body would permit, to the pleasures of romping outdoor sports—especially to the joy of running wild through a neighbouring woods. When at last he had passed through the required course and was declared fit to wrestle with the world at large, he carried away from the college a thorough grounding in the "humanities," and a real love for the finer graces of classics and modern literature.

For some time it had been his ambition to enter the profession of law. With this cherished purpose in mind he journeyed to the big city of Montreal, where he became a clerk in the law-office of Rodolphe Laflamme, a violent Liberal, and entered the Faculty of Law at McGill University. In his studies at the university he showed himself, like so many great men, a good, though not a precocious student. It was his oratory that won him the greatest recognition; for, when it came time to graduate, he was chosen as the best speaker of the year to deliver the valedictory address.

On being launched as a fully-equipped barrister-at-law Laurier bravely tried, in partnership with an older man, to establish a practice in Montreal. But two things united to convince him that his efforts were futile. He discovered, in the first place, as many another young lawyer or doctor has done, that a great

city has a cruel way of overlooking the talents, however brilliant, of youth and inexperience. Clients came slowly and required little. In time, doubtless, his energy and ability would have won a place for him, had it not been for the second circumstance: his health, which had never been robust, at this period in his life became almost hopeless. Lung trouble developed. He suffered from frequent hemorrhages. As the only chance of recovery, his friends advised a change to the fresh air and quiet life of the country. And so, three years after his graduation, we find him in the town of Arthabaska (then called Arthabaskaville) editing a weekly newspaper, *Le Défricheur*, practising his profession of law, and fighting the same battle for life that his younger contemporary, Stevenson, was fighting at that very time in the damp and chilly winds of Edinburgh.

Shortly after his removal to Arthabaska he was married; and the story of his courtship is not without a dashing strain of romance. While in Montreal he had met a young music teacher, Zoë Lafontaine, with whom he had fallen deeply in love. But how could a man in his condition marry—a man under the shadow of death? Young love was strong in his heart; but his chivalrous instincts were stronger. He had departed to Arthabaska without asking her to share his doubtful future.

Mlle. Lafontaine was young; Mlle. Lafontaine was exceedingly attractive. Other suitors presented themselves. The handsome, but delicate, young lawyer had never really asked her to become his wife. Discretion, backed by the sage advice of elders, stifled the

flames of youthful fancy, and she consented to marry a well-to-do city doctor. But on the announcement of the engagement, a friend—a Dr. Gauthier, who must have possessed some of the lovable humanity of Margaret Deland's Dr. Lavendar—sent a telegram to Laurier.

This telegram turned the trick. Forgetting his doubtful prospects and more doubtful health, Laurier hurried into Montreal by the first train, interviewed the lady, proffered his suit most eloquently, married her that same night at eight o'clock, and at ten went back to Arthabaska, where he was due to argue a case in the law courts the next morning. Three days later he went once more to Montreal and returned bringing with him the one who was to be his devoted companion for the remainder of his days.

When Mlle. Lafontaine married Laurier she did so with the sad fear that within a short time she might be left a widow. But her constant care, together with the healthfulness and peace of the small-town atmosphere, slowly, very slowly, restored him to health. It was years, however, before he was finally out of danger.

Laurier's life in Arthabaska was one of remarkable serenity. He lived in a plain square red-brick house surrounded by trees and gardens; his office was a frame building as unimposing as a village flour and feed store. The pleading of unimportant cases, a desultory activity in journalism (*La Défricheur* died soon after he took it over), walks among the quiet hills and woods of the neighbourhood, and in the evenings good talks, and whist, and long, pleasant hours of reading before an

open fire—these were the occupations that changed his weakness into health, and his anxiety into hopefulness and renewed aspirations. And what were his aspirations? The names of some of the men whose portraits hung upon his library walls will give answer—Gladstone, George Brown, Papineau, Edward Blake. If health would permit he hoped to follow in the footsteps of these great Liberal leaders, and to take his part in the public life of his country.

At this time Liberalism was having pretty hard sailing in Quebec. These were the days when old Sir John, through his lieutenant, Cartier, held the province in the hollow of his hand. And to add to its troubles, the Liberal party had fallen into very bad favour with the Church. Several newspapers, amongst them *La Défricheur*, were stifled by the Catholic authorities because of their liberal views; and in some parishes it was as much as a man's good standing was worth to let himself be known as even a moderate *Rouge*. In taking this stand the leaders of the Church were perfectly sincere—they believed themselves to be combating a blood-red danger to the Church. Their mistake was in confusing Liberalism as a political doctrine with Liberalism as the cynical spirit of revolt which had swept so large a portion of France out of the arms of the Church into the darkness of mere atheism. It was to be one of the outstanding achievements of Laurier's career to show that political thinking did not contradict religious faith, that a citizen of Quebec could at the same time be a good Liberal and a good Catholic.

In 1871, at the age of thirty, Wilfrid Laurier was

elected to the Provincial Legislature of Quebec. Almost immediately he became a leader in the Liberal party. His first speech, delivered in the debate on the Address from the Throne, was hailed as a masterpiece of rhetoric. But his brilliance, his grasp of constitutional principles, his ringing eloquence, marked him out for the wider field of Dominion politics. In 1874, therefore, when the "Pacific Scandal" gave the Liberal party its chance, he resigned his seat in the Quebec Legislature to enter the Federal Parliament as member for Drummond-Arthabaska.

After three years as a private member, Laurier was taken into the Mackenzie Cabinet as Minister of Inland Revenue. As such it was necessary for him to seek re-election—a practice that is usually a mere matter of form. His colleagues, indeed, expected that he would be returned by acclamation. But they were disappointed. The Conservatives, eager for revenge after their defeat at the last general election, accepted this gauge of battle, and entered the contest prepared to win by fair means or foul. The most outrageous propaganda was used. Electors of the less sophisticated sort were told that the ministry Laurier had accepted was a ministry in the Presbyterian Church, and that no child of his had ever been baptized. This last charge, though perfectly true, was somewhat superfluous, seeing that he had no children. But it served; and, to make a long story short, when the ballots were counted it was found that Laurier had been defeated by twenty-nine votes!

This inglorious rejection at the beginning of his political career was extremely discouraging; but he

accepted the rebuff with fortitude. A seat was found for him in Quebec city, where he fought and, after a desperate battle, won by a fair majority.

His ministerial eminence, however, was short lived. Life had returned to the limbs of the Conservative party with a vengeance. At the next general election, which occurred the following year, the Mackenzie Government was hopelessly defeated, and Sir John A. Macdonald was triumphantly reinstated in the premiership which he was to occupy until his death.

For eighteen years Laurier remained a member of the Opposition. His rise to prominence in the ranks of the Liberals was steady, but not spectacular. He became first the acknowledged leader of the French wing, and then upon the retirement of Blake, of the whole Liberal party. He seldom spoke in parliamentary debate, but when he did it was always with striking effect. On the public platform he based his claims for support, not on high-sounding platitudes, but on sincere personal conviction backed by sound political thinking. Against five Conservative Premiers he fought a straight, clean fight, until, with his refusal to be controlled by the Catholic Church upon the Manitoba School question, he was swept upon a wave of popular enthusiasm into the highest position any Canadian statesman may occupy.

Laurier became Premier in 1896. The next year was the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. As the new Premier, it was his duty to be present at that spectacular function as representative of the Dominion of Canada.

This duty he fulfilled with a distinction, a grace, a dignity that could not have been surpassed. He met on equal footing the most illustrious men of Britain: William Ewart Gladstone, that greatest Liberal of all time; Joseph Chamberlain, that devastating autocrat, with his monocle, his orchid and his tremendous enthusiasm for imperial expansion; and scholars, statesmen, princes, admirals, generals—an unending company. Everywhere he was entertained with the most lavish hospitality. There seemed to be no limit to the number of receptions and banquets that he was called upon to attend. "I am not sure whether the British Empire needs a new constitution," he wrote back to a friend, "but I am certain that every Jubilee guest will need one." And on that greatest day of all, when the magnificent procession symbolizing the might and grandeur of our Empire, wound slowly through the cheering crowds up to St. Paul's this immaculately dressed colonial statesman, with his white hair and courtly, winning smile, received an ovation second only to that which greeted the aged Queen herself.

Laurier had always expressed a democratic aversion to titles; but the good queen, seeing in him a man worthy of distinction, had set her heart upon honouring him, and he felt that it would have been discourteous to refuse. And if titles—after being soiled by so much trafficking, so much sordidness of party politics—still carry with them any suggestion of ancient charm and dignity, and the clear, high idealism of ancient chivalry, to no man could one have been more suited than to this French-Canadian Premier. The serene refinement of

his features, the piquant touch of race in his voice and bearing, his unfailing courtesy to high and low alike, won the hearts of all who met him. He might have walked into the flatness of London's up-to-date society from an antique picture frame. There is peculiar justice therefore in the destiny that sent him down to history, against his own wishes, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

After a short visit to France, the venerated home of his ancestors, he returned to Canada to continue the onerous duties of his office.

The years of Laurier's premiership were years of steady national growth and progress. Minor crises were not wanting to fill the columns of the daily newspapers and occupy the minds of political leaders; but no question of the magnitude of Confederation arose to stir the country to its depths. At the beginning of his term of office the Manitoba School question was settled to the satisfaction of all but the extremists. The Boer War came next to cause an outburst of patriotic emotion; but this flame of excitement soon faded into the busy preoccupation of a young country developing its wealth of natural resources. Imperial relationships were much discussed; imperial conferences were attended; and the Alaskan Boundary dispute was finally concluded by arbitration and the signing of a treaty. During these years, too, the Great West found itself, was peopled, and was tapped by two new transcontinental railways. And the tariff issue, which we have constantly with us, kept persistently bobbing up in one form or another, until in 1911, after fifteen years in office, Laurier nailed

his colours to the mast of Reciprocity, and went down fighting for freer trade with the United States.

He was by this time an old man. And when, a little later, the Great War came with all its unprecedented problems, it found him still amazingly alert and keen, but without that instinctive certitude in meeting the needs of the hour which had characterized him in his prime. He retained his position as Liberal leader; in the House of Commons and the country he was still listened to with the greatest respect. But his eloquence had lost something of its magic. And when, in 1917, he opposed conscription and stood out against entering a union cabinet with Sir Robert Borden, much of his old prestige departed. On this issue many of his most faithful followers left him. From the election which ensued his old party emerged but a remnant of its former self. Yet through it all he never lost his poise and dignity; and as we look back now we see something extremely touching in the picture of this old man, placid with the benevolence of his seventy-six years, but proud and unswerving as a soldier, fighting in isolation against what he believed to be injustice, and clinging in a world turned topsy-turvy, to the principles that had guided him through life. The more violent pulpit and press of Ontario even accused him of disloyalty. Writing to a friend at the time he said: "It has been my lot to run the whole gamut of prejudice in Canada. In 1896 I was excommunicated by the Roman priests, and in 1917 by the Protestant parsons." But the next year, when he died suddenly of paralysis, the country

forgot its condemnation and, even in the tense anxiety of war, even with the mourning in many of its homes, paused for a moment to reflect on the magnitude of his achievements.

When asked shortly before the War what he himself considered to be his most valuable accomplishment he replied after a moment's hesitation, very modestly, "If I am to be remembered for anything, I think it will be that I have helped to bring better feeling between the two races of Canada, the French and the English." History will probably confirm his judgment. No man was ever more hated than Laurier; yet in his presence hatred vanished as before some powerful solvent. Born a French-Canadian with a deep pride in the historic greatness of his people, he yet had a profound admiration for British institutions and the genius of the British race.

"The history of England," he wrote to a friend, "has for a foreigner like myself a charm, which, I am sure, it has not for one accustomed from his infancy to English ideas and traditions. As you follow in Macaulay's pages the constant struggle between liberty and despotism and the slow and steady progress and at last complete triumph of liberty, the student of French history is struck with amazement. This is the reason why I admire you so much, you Anglo-Saxons."

It was this dual allegiance, this loyalty to the traditions of his own race, united to a deep faith in British constitutional principles, which placed his statesmanship on such a high level. Although at opposite poles from Macdonald in habits of thought, in temperament, in

political affiliations, he was yet able, through his breadth of sympathy, to carry on his great predecessor's work of nation-building. Clearly before him stretched the road that Canada must travel—the road of co-operation and self-reliance. Canada must be a unified Dominion, not independent of the Empire, but self-dependent. To the task of leading his countrymen, both French and English, along this road, he gave his whole effort. He never insulted his electors by feeding them with vulgar vituperation or by attempting to excite them with the strong drink of prejudice. From the colourless army of second-rate politicians who declaim, and rant, and gesticulate and whose sole plea for support is the woeful sinning of the opposite party, he stands out as a man who took public life seriously, as a man with a real vision of what ought to be. It has been said of a certain general that it made men brave to look at him; to look at Laurier gave one a sense of the value of sincerity and courage in politics, and a new faith in the high possibilities of sound and far-sighted statesmanship.

XIII

SIR WILLIAM OSLER

THE MENTION of Sir William Osler's name usually provokes a question: how did such a mind, keenly scientific, yet touched with the finer graces of a classical scholarship, a mind alive at every point, eager and sensitive, yet evidencing that fine restraint, that perfect good sense which is the mark of genuine culture —how did such a mind grow up and flourish in the rough untilled soil of a colony remote from the intellectual centres of the world? For the Canada of Sir William Osler's boyhood was very different from the Canada of to-day. He was born in the midst of pioneer conditions, at a time when the necessity of making a home and a living loomed larger in men's thoughts than the advantages of intellectual refinement. Yet when Dr. Osler, the product of Canada's primitive educational institutions, went to Oxford as Regius Professor of Medicine, he already possessed that admirable sanity, that richness and breadth of culture, which we usually expect a man to acquire from association with an ancient university. How was such an extraordinary achievement possible? Like all questions of personality and genius, this question cannot be answered completely;

but a glance at Sir William Osler's life, especially in its earlier stages, may help to lessen the wonder.

Sir William Osler, it may be first noted, came of a rather remarkable family. His father's forebears, so far as can be learned, were plain seafaring people in the English village of Falmouth; but a brother of his father's, Edward Osler, revealed something of the latent family genius. Edward Osler emigrated to New England at an early age, and there won for himself considerable fame as a writer. In the "Transactions of the Royal Philosophical Society" of his day may be found articles by him on various subjects connected with natural history, amongst them being one series on "Marine and Boring Animals." These articles, it is interesting to observe, he himself illustrated with surprising skill. But he did not confine himself to scientific writing. He produced besides a "Life of Lord Exmouth," which is still a standard reference book in the British navy, and several very fine hymns, two of which are preserved in the present hymn book of the Church of England in Canada.

Sir William Osler's father, F. L. Osler, did not attain to such prominence in the life of his time as did Edward Osler, but he displayed that independence of mind, that spiritual restlessness, which mark a strong and original personality. At the age of twenty-seven, after fourteen years of strenuous life in the Royal Navy, he experienced a crisis in his inner life, abandoned his career as a sailor and determined to prepare himself for work in the Church. With this commendable end in view he became a student at Cambridge University, and in due time took his degree. It had been his intention to seek

a curacy in England, but on his graduation the missionary organization of the Church persuaded him to undertake a charge in the forests of Upper Canada. He did not, however, come out alone. Before leaving England he was married to a young woman, Ellen Tree Picton, earnest and devoted enough to venture with him into this unknown land.

Mrs. Osler, like her husband, was by no means a person of ordinary character. Wise and just, strong-minded but kindly, she is remembered even yet by her grandchildren as a woman who always kept her promises —an exceedingly desirable quality in the head of a family. And her promises of punishment were just as sure as her promises of reward. Never did she hesitate to correct any of her nine children when the need arose. Yet it was her sweetness of disposition and the deep and genuine interest she displayed in everything that went on in her home and in the parish that really made her what she was—a cheerful and patient clergyman's wife and an admirable mother of a family. Before the close of her long life—she lived to be over a hundred —she had the unique satisfaction of seeing four members of her family attain outstanding success in their chosen professions: Hon. Featherstone Osler was a celebrated and influential judge; Britton Bath Osler also gained great eminence in the profession of the law; Sir Edmund B. Osler was one of Canada's foremost financiers; and best known of all was Sir William Osler, who became a physician of international fame.

If Sir William Osler was favoured by heredity, he was even more fortunate in the educational influences

that helped to form his growing intelligence. He was born on July 12th, 1849, at Bond Head, a small village north of Toronto, and was brought up in what he himself described as "the best of all environments" for the training of young people—a village rectory. Although the Oslers lived a very quiet and simple life, indulging themselves in only the most wholesome amusements, their household was the centre of the parish. The mother, who took a deep interest in the welfare of her husband's parishioners, conducted classes for the instruction of uneducated immigrant women; and the father, who in spite of his belated attendance at college was familiar with Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Mathematics, led several students through the courses in Divinity (this was before Bishop Strachan had founded Trinity College), and himself fitted them for ordination. And both parents, with a fine admixture of sympathy and strictness, applied themselves devotedly to the education of their children.

When William was nine years old, his father, wishing to give his boys the best educational opportunities possible, accepted the rectorship of the parishes of Dundas, Ancaster and Flamborough, and moved to Dundas. Here William, together with his brothers, attended for some years the well-known grammar school conducted by King and McKee. He was described at this period by a relative from England who visited the rectory as "a light-hearted boy with many of the tastes and much of the dependableness of a man." At the end of seven years, however, his high spirits (he was always full of mischief) brought about his expulsion

from school. What really started the trouble is not known, but a statement of the headmaster's to the boy's father shows that William was not without a saving spark of deviltry. "That [charge] against your son," wrote the outraged master, "was that he, when passing to the school, put his mouth to the keyhole of the door and called out contemptuously 'Come out, Old McKee,' with other disparaging terms." Behind the whole matter there was probably something of the bitterness existing at the time between the dissenting religious bodies and the established Church, for the Reverend F. L. Osler, although disapproving of the boy's impudence, appears to have taken his part. In a letter addressed to the school authorities he said: "As to sending my son back to school, I would never disgrace a child of mine so much as to place him under the jurisdiction of men capable of acting as a majority of the Dundas Board of Trustees have done."

From Dundas William was, therefore, sent to the grammar school in Barrie, where he spent a year or two with some profit; but the preparatory school that exerted on him the greatest influence was Trinity College School at Weston. The reason for the transfer from Barrie to Weston is rather amusing. His mother, it appears, was taken with a sentence in the school prospectus which said, "The senior boys will go into the drawing-room in the evenings to learn to sing and dance." But it was something quite different from singing and dancing that left its impress on the mind of William Osler. At Trinity College School he came in

contact with one of the most outstanding teachers of the day.

The Reverend W. A. Johnson, headmaster of the school, was a man of striking individuality. His lean, ascetic face, with its thin-lipped, firmly-set mouth, its high forehead and its keen and serious eyes, revealed him as a man possessing an unusual combination of tenacity and idealism. Many years before he took charge of William Osler, Johnson, then a young cavalry officer, had come to Upper Canada with his father to settle in the rough and lonely wilderness north of Lake Erie. Remarkable as it may seem, he brought with him as his most treasured possession an exceedingly efficient microscope. With this and the few books that could be obtained he continued studies that had already been begun in England. Deeply engrossed in the natural sciences, he nevertheless cherished the ambition of entering the Christian ministry; and in spite of the difficulties and hardships of pioneer life he at last succeeded in qualifying himself as a clergyman in the Anglican Church. But his fine spirit after a few years spent in performing the duties of a parish priest eventually found its outlet in helping young minds on their stony pilgrimage to knowledge and truth. Largely through his efforts Trinity College School was started at Weston (it was later transferred to Port Hope), and to its direction he gave up the best years of his life.

When William Osler entered Trinity College School the headmaster took him into his own household and treated him as one of the family, possibly because he was intimate with the Reverend F. L. Osler, possibly

because he took a special fancy to the lad's manly bearing. Between the master and the pupil there developed a strong friendship, which soon included a third person, Dr. James Bovell, the school physician. This Dr. Bovell, who along with his school duties also lectured at Trinity College in what seems to us an odd combination —theology and medicine—was an interesting figure in the intellectual life of his day. In the course of his career he produced several books, principally on the relationship of the natural sciences to theology. The chief dragon that he went forth to slay was Darwinism, that dreadful monster which a generation ago greatly troubled the minds of pious people, and in his writings he manfully fought for his belief in the God-creation of the world. Yet although he argued so valiantly for the theological point of view, he was himself broadly read in all branches of science. He and Johnson and the eager, serious boy (deeply serious in spite of his overflowing vitality and love of fun) would wander together about the woods and marshes of the countryside searching for specimens, and would return to the school to mount the rarer treasures, or to peer with avid curiosity through the microscope at the infinitesimal wonders of the universe.

What intercourse with these two men meant to William Osler might well be made a matter of study by scholastic authorities, for here was the better part of education. Here was the "mysterious contact of spirit" with spirit; here was "thought kindling itself against the fire of living thought." Untrammelled by a worship of routine and rigid system, these two genuine

scholars gave to their young protégé what he in turn was to hand on to many and many a struggling student at McGill, at Philadelphia, at Johns Hopkins and at Oxford—a consuming passion for what is right and true.

No youth of his time, at least on this continent, was more fortunate than William Osler in the home and school influences that played upon his early life but his opportunities would have profited him nothing had he himself not been unusually industrious. All his life he was possessed of a demoniac love of hard work. When he passed from the school at Weston to Trinity Theological College (he at first intended to enter the Church), and later when his scientific inclination drew him into the medical course, he threw himself heart and soul into his studies. "Brousais," wrote a Paris student in speaking of one of his idols (the passage is to be found in Sir William Osler's lecture on the "Alabama Student") "is a genius, and when he entered life he saw that something was to be done, or rather that *he* must do something, and he seized the science of medicine as a good old doctor would a bottle of lotion and shook it manfully." This was the spirit in which William Osler laboured. When he started out in life he saw that in this world there was real work to be done, and he resolved that some of it was to be his to do. Yet never was he a drudge or a bookworm. He entered with the same ardour into sports and college pranks as he did into work; and throughout his student days, and indeed his whole life, he let his love of intellectual exploration lead him into regions far beyond the limits of the recognized courses of study.

In 1870 Osler transferred from Toronto to the medical school of McGill at Montreal. Two reasons seem to have influenced him in making the change; James Bovell, his old friend and teacher, was leaving Toronto to enter the Church, and "the hospital facilities," as his father stated in a letter, "were better in Montreal." In his new surroundings he carried on his work with even greater energy than before, caring little for examinations, but engaging constantly in independent researches in the laboratory and the hospital. So outstanding was his work that the faculty, the year after he entered McGill, decided to award a special prize to a thesis prepared by him "because it was greatly distinguished for originality and research." Two years spent in post-graduate work in London, Berlin and Vienna followed his graduation; but in 1874 he returned to McGill as Professor of the Institutes of Medicine, a chair that included the study of pathology and physiology.

It was this appointment that determined the future course of Dr. Osler's career. His work was to be not so much that of the practising physician as of the medical educator. In Montreal he had, it is true, his offices, and even professed to have office hours, but he rarely kept them. So insatiable was his thirst for knowledge, so indefatigable was he in his laboratory researches and his post-mortem examinations, in his use of the microscope, and in his study of the manifestations of disease in both animals and men, that he had little time left, in spite of his amazing energy, for the routine of the general practitioner. It was at this time, too, that his name began to appear at the head of all sorts of medical

articles in the current medical journals, and he became known as that unusual phenomenon, a scientific investigator capable of expressing his ideas in pleasing and intelligible English.

From Montreal he went to Philadelphia as Professor of Clinical Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania. In this city he shocked prominent medical men of more orthodox views by refusing to do general practice. "When he announced that he would take no maternity cases," an eminent Philadelphia doctor told Sir William's nephew years later, "we told him that no physician in Philadelphia could practise successfully without doing so;" and another medical authority added that they "washed their hands of him as a young fool." But Dr. Osler's shrewd and far-seeing mind (he was always ahead of his time) had discovered a new sphere of work for the specialist in medicine—that of the consulting physician. At this work, it must be admitted, he did not make a large income, but the acquisition of money was at no time a factor in his ambitions. He loved his work for its own sake and for the sake of humanity, and his reward came four years later when a greatly enlarged opportunity presented itself.

When the Johns Hopkins Hospital was built in Baltimore, the university and hospital authorities looked around for the best man available to fill the important and onerous position of physician-in-chief in the hospital and head of the department of medicine in the university. After considering a great many able men, their decision rested upon this vigorous young Canadian, Professor Osler, of the University of

Pennsylvania. In the fall of 1888 the appointment was made, and in the summer of the following year, Osler entered upon the most important phase of his career. With thorough efficiency he overcame the enormous difficulties of organization, and in a remarkably short time, backed by the authorities in control and assisted by many competent subordinates, he had created an institution for the care of patients and the instruction of students unexcelled in the English-speaking world.

Although he gave much of his time to the management of the hospital and to his work as a consulting physician, his greatest influence was exerted through his teaching. He found the methods of clinical instruction at that time in vogue in the United States not at all to his liking. In most American colleges the students were given very little opportunity of coming into actual contact with the patients whom they were supposed to be studying. The lecturer would gather his class in a large auditorium and there, with the patient who was the subject of the lecture scarcely visible to most of those present, he would deliver a general talk on symptoms and treatment. This detached method of demonstration was contrary to all Osler's views and traditions. In Canada the bedside examination had for years been the basis of clinical instruction and to this method Dr. Osler was thoroughly devoted. Although he himself was a great reader and had perhaps the broadest knowledge of the theory of medicine of any man of his time, yet with his essentially practical temper of mind he was always an advocate of "learning by doing." He took his students with him to the bedside of a patient, and there,

without any flourish of oratory, he talked over the case with them and permitted them to make their own examinations. It was a method that was eminently practical, a method that has since been adopted by almost every medical school in the United States.

Dr. Osler's influence on the methods of clinical demonstration will long be remembered in his adopted country, but this was not his most conspicuous service to the medical profession. He was something more than a thoroughly competent instructor—he was a teacher capable of arousing in his students unlimited enthusiasm. His own passionate devotion to his profession was contagious. Untiring himself, he demanded unceasing industry of his students; yet he was never a slave-driver. Under his tuition no one idled away his time, but no one had any desire to idle. Such was the stimulating and inspiring effect of his tonic personality, that the long and wearisome search for knowledge lost its tedium, its tameness, its atmosphere of drudgery, and became an exhilarating gallop over river and hedgerow after an elusive, but most enticing fox—became, in other words, the best fun in the world.

He had that rare gift—that highest gift which any teacher can possess—of being able to give advice to young men without either boring or antagonizing them. His infectious humour, his unquenchable vitality, his unbounded enthusiasm for the great work that he shared with them—these qualities kindled in the minds of his students the fires of a noble and unselfish ambition. They admired him with the whole-souled, unquestioning admiration of youth; and his sympathy

with their youthful viewpoint, his insight into their problems and temptations, led them to accept his advice, not as the didacticism of a superior, but as the counsel of a friend.

His classroom lectures were spiced with sage and memorable utterances, as full of wit as they were of wisdom. In his desire to impress on undergraduates the need of preserving that cool and scientific detachment which is not hampered by preconceptions or hysteria, and does not let itself be enticed into "the pursuits and pleasures incident to youth," he constantly advised them, with a touch of his own caustic humour, "to keep their cerebellums on ice." The spirit of their endeavour must be that of ascetic devotion which has no time for "sporting with Amaryllis in the shade," nor for "worshipping at the shrine of Bacchus, of Venus and of Circe." Thoroughness they should strive for above everything else, knowing from *a* to *z* the sciences upon which the practice of medicine is based; for "the physician without physiology and chemistry flounders along in an aimless fashion, never able to gain any accurate conception of disease, practising a sort of popgun pharmacy, hitting now the malady and again the patient, he himself not knowing which." Added to thoroughness should be humility. "Errors in judgment," he reminded his students, "must occur in the practice of an art which consists largely in the balancing of possibilities." And they must avoid as the Evil One "that apathy which is as deep as Rip Van Winkle's sleep."

His advice touched not only the practical side of

medicine but extended to the whole ethics of the profession. No man ever did more than he to raise the physician's work above the level of a mere business. "It is a very strange thing," remarked a colleague in Baltimore, "that it is only occasionally that Dr. Osler can find time to come to see a patient with me in consultation when a large fee is involved, but on every occasion when I have asked him to attend an autopsy he has accepted the invitation at once." His contempt for the "Gehazis who work only for shekels" was deep and sincere; and with keen insight into human nature and a shrewd understanding of the temptations that beset a young doctor's career he warned his students against humbug. "It cannot be denied," he said on one occasion, "that in dealings with the public just a little touch of humbug is immensely effective, but it is not necessary. In a large city there were three eminent consultants of world-wide reputation; one was said to be a good physician, but no humbug; the second was no physician, but a great humbug; the third was a great physician and a great humbug. The first achieved the greatest success, professional and social—possibly not financial."

For sixteen years he remained at Johns Hopkins. In spite of his preoccupation with research and teaching, he became immensely popular in Baltimore as a consulting physician. It was a saying that it was unfashionable to die without being seen by Dr. Osler. He was in great demand, too, as a speaker at medical conventions and banquets. With instinctive good taste he avoided scientific jargon, and delivered his fascinating talks on all sorts of topics (his interests were as broad

as humanity) in pure and trenchant English. His book on the practice of medicine went into several editions, was adopted as a text-book in most English-speaking colleges, and was translated into several foreign languages. And as his students went forth into their scattered fields of labour and themselves became busy practitioners or famous teachers, his influence spread in ever-widening circles over the whole North American continent. But it is pleasant for us to recall that Dr. Osler for the last years of his life was to return, if not to Canada, at least to the British Empire.

In 1905, at the special request of the King, he accepted the appointment of Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford and entered into the medical and scholastic life of England with the same zeal and adaptability that marked his whole career. It was here that old age crept softly upon him, not touching the fine enthusiasm of his youthful spirit (he never really grew old), but adding an increased gentleness and dignity to his bearing. Many honours were conferred upon him, culminating in 1911 in his being created a baronet of the United Kingdom. Although he was sixty-five years old when the Great War came, he threw himself ardently into the Empire's service. But the war took its toll of him. His only son was killed in France. Sir William bore his sorrow with noble fortitude, but the blow left its mark upon him, and in 1919, his powers of resistance weakened by bereavement and overstrain, he died of pneumonia.

Sir William Osler was a great doctor, but he was also a great preacher; and the lesson he taught was the old

one of the inestimable value of kindliness. He himself was never known to utter a hurtful criticism against a colleague; and if in his presence any bitter remarks were made he invariably turned the conversation, with delicate tact, but unmistakable intention, in another direction. Life was too short, he felt, there was too much real work to be done, to waste one's time in giving vent to professional jealousies. His farewell words to the medical profession of America are the sincere expression of a fine and generous nature:

"It may be," he said, "that in the hurry and bustle of a busy life I have given offence to some—who can avoid it? Unwittingly I may have shot an arrow o'er the house and hurt a brother. If so, I am sorry, and I ask his pardon. So far as I can read my heart I leave you in charity with all. I have striven with none, not, as Walter Savage Landor says, because none was worth the strife, but because I have had a deep conviction of the hatefulness of strife, of its uselessness, of its disastrous effect, and a still deeper conviction of the blessings that come with unity, peace and concord. And I would give to each of you, my brothers—to you who hear me now, and to you who may elsewhere read my words, to you who do our greatest work labouring incessantly for small rewards in towns and country places, to you the more favoured ones who have special fields of work, to you teachers and professors and scientific workers, to one and all through the length and breadth of the land, I give you a single word as my parting commandment. It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that thou

shouldst say, 'Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea that thou shouldst say, 'Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it—*charity.*"

XIV

PAUL PEEL

A NOTABLE event happened recently in the art history of Canada. After lengthy negotiations through agents in England two connoisseurs of London, Ontario, succeeded in purchasing from the Hungarian government perhaps the most famous picture ever painted by a Canadian.

This picture is a charming study of child-life. In it two small chubby girls, the one standing, the other seated on the floor, are shown warming themselves after their bath before a great fire. Like kittens they are basking in the physical sensation of warmth. Their flesh is rosy from the warm water and the towel, and their hair is still done up in those odd old-fashioned knobs into which it has been wound to keep it dry. Their figures are full of the innocence and unaffected naturalness of childhood. They are not children posed for a picture and induced into artificial attitudes—they are real children and their attractiveness lies in their unconscious self-complacency. The older girl, who is standing with her hands extended towards the blaze and her head tilted knowingly to one side, is very evidently being imitated by her small sister, who sits

cosily on the rug with her tiny fingers even more widely out-stretched. Both children are taking themselves very seriously; they are as prim and as pleased with themselves in their innocent nudity as little old ladies.

The artist has revealed his skill in his representation of the ruddy flames glowing on their exquisite, rotund little bodies. The lights and shadows are suggested just enough to give the bodies substance and weight, yet not enough to destroy their melting softness; and the whole atmosphere is suffused with such a grateful flood of brightness and warmth that it makes one feel domestic and comfortable merely to look at it. A famous French critic was greatly taken with the picture. "I cite to you now Mr. Paul Peel," he wrote in a contemporary periodical; "his nude children before a blazing fireplace, all blazing themselves with light, and so well arranged in their natural postures—are they not wonders? . . . They are as God made them."

The history of this picture is of considerable interest. It was painted in Paris some years ago by a young Canadian artist named Paul Peel; was hung in the Salon, and was the first painting by any artist from this continent, whether Canadian or American, to be awarded the distinction of a gold medal. Many rich patrons of art wished to buy it, but the artist, desiring that his work should go to some public institution, disposed of it to the Hungarian Government. Madame Sara Bernhardt, it is said, was amongst those who bid for it. "I would have been willing to pay any price for it," she declared. "The little girl with the red top-knot reminded me so much of myself when I was little."

After being further exhibited to many hundreds of people, it duly took its place amongst other famous works of art in the public gallery at Budapest. There it remained for almost thirty years; but Hungary's defeat in the Great War with the consequent sad depletion of her national treasury resulted in the sale of many of her works of art, and the Canadian masterpiece at last has found a home in Canada.

Paul Peel was born in 1860 in London, Ontario. His father, John Peel, was a marble worker with a decided taste for art. Along with his daily chipping and polishing of monuments, he engaged in the teaching of drawing, painting, and clay modelling. All his children —there were five—were educated to love and respect art, and two at least showed marked artistic ability. Mildred, the eldest, who became the wife of Sir George W. Ross, gained some distinction for her clay modelling; and Paul, the youngest son, who in childhood did not seem to be as gifted as his sister, as years went on revealed an even more outstanding talent.

A story is told of these two children that illustrates the artistic atmosphere in which the family was reared. One day their father came home with a Jew's-harp, which he said was for the child who could draw the best picture. A subject was chosen—two boys wrestling—scarcely, it would seem, a suitable subject for a girl—but both Paul and Mildred sat down at a table and went eagerly to work. When the drawings were finished the father soberly considered them for a few minutes, duly weighing their respective merits. "I'm afraid Paul gets the Jew's harp," he said finally. "No one but

a girl would have made those boys pull each other's hair!"

Paul first studied art under his father, and with the other members of the family engaged in drawing and clay modelling in the cluttered, dusty little studio at the back of the marble works on Richmond street. But the boy's pronounced talent soon necessitated a more expert training than his father could give him, and before he was eighteen he was sent off to study at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts at Philadelphia. There he remained for four years, during two of which his aptitude and devotion brought him the appointment of demonstrator in anatomy. From Philadelphia he went to England and thence almost immediately to Paris.

His career in this art centre of the world was truly remarkable. Coming as he did from a new country, where the development of natural resources and commercial expansion filled men's minds to the exclusion of the finer values of art, he competed successfully with the gifted students who had long breathed the artistic atmosphere of the cafés and boulevards of the *Quartier Latin*. He studied under several eminent teachers, amongst them Gérome, who was probably the most celebrated and popular painter of the time in Paris. From this exacting critic Peel quickly won high approbation. It is told of him that he, like Rembrandt, by gazing in the looking glass, painted his own portrait and presented it to his teacher for criticism. Gérome laughingly complimented him on his courage in bringing his model with him and proceeded to give him the most flattering praise for his technical skill.

Although Peel was thoroughly Canadian and was always intensely loyal to his native country, he dropped into the Bohemian student life of Paris with surprising ease. Possessing a natural gift for languages, he soon spoke French like a native. He had a gaiety and an eagerness of disposition that were almost Gallic, and his frankness, his modesty and his boyish friendliness quickly won for him a place in the open camaraderie of student life. He had little of the egotism that breaks out in eccentricities of dress and manner, and no æsthetic affectations. His sweeping curly brown hair and his neatly trimmed Vandyke beard alone suggested the artist. But in spite of his normal appearance, no one could be long in Peel's presence without being aware that he was an unusual man. His lithe, erect figure was full of vitality, and as he talked his dark brown eyes melted and shone with sympathetic light.

Peel's devotion to art was passionate and enduring. He did not allow early successes to turn his head; neither did he grow weary when the road to skilful craftmanship seemed long and stony. With great tenacity and patience he laboured at the perfecting of his technique. "Rest?" he would say when advised to take a holiday. "How can I rest if I do not paint? It is no rest to be idle." Teachers might praise his work and the public might buy it, but he felt that the one critic who must ultimately be pleased was himself, and he could be satisfied only with perfection.

But despite his deep love for his work, he had sufficient outside interests to keep his mind alert and human. He was a skilled fencer and could meet on an equality

the best swordsmen of Paris. He read a great deal and travelled as extensively as his means would allow in France and the neighbouring countries.

While on a visit to Southern France with his sister, Mildred, he stayed at the same *pension* with a charming and gifted Danish girl, Isaure Verdier. Common interests drew them together. With a talent for writing and for music, this versatile young lady also painted exceedingly good miniatures. The three wandered about the beautiful sunny fields and lanes together sketching; a romantic attachment followed and Paul and Mlle. Verdier were shortly afterwards married. Two children, a boy and a girl, were born to them and they were exceedingly happy in their devotion to each other and to art.

Paul Peel, by the time of his marriage, although he still continued to study with the best masters of Paris, was himself an artist of note. He was able to do what in his profession is none too easy—to support himself and his family solely on the proceeds of his art. He could number among his patrons such eminent people as Queen Alexandra—then the Princess of Wales —and the King of Denmark. In 1889 a picture entitled "A Venetian Bather," which now hangs in the National Gallery at Ottawa, was exhibited in the Salon. A little later a better known picture, "How Bitter Life Is," was classed amongst those that received honourable mention. This latter picture, though it shows signs of immaturity, is characteristic of his best work. It depicts a rather touching scene. An old artist is seated on a stool before an easel painting a

little naked boy as Cupid; but the child has become so weary of maintaining the correct attitude that he has leaned his head pathetically against the easel as if in tears. This picture was a great success. It was admired at the time of its exhibition, and has since been reproduced freely in colour prints. But Peel's greatest triumph came the following year when his picture "After the Bath," which has already been described, was awarded the Gold Medal.

Although this young artist might seem to have had every reason for being contented with what he had so far achieved, there was one cause for disappointment. He had cherished the wish to do something that would make his own country proud of his accomplishment; but Canadians scarcely realized what he was doing. On one visit to his home he had brought with him a large collection of his canvases which, after being offered in London, were sold at public auction in Toronto. A few discriminating connoisseurs bid eagerly. The Canadian Government purchased two for the National Gallery at Ottawa. Another was bought by an ex-mayor of Toronto as a gift to the City and now hangs in the City Hall there. But Canadians at large had not learned to discern and patronize real merit. Some of his paintings went for three or four dollars—a smaller price than would be paid for a fairly good print—and the whole collection brought the artist scarcely more than two thousand dollars.

Even Peel's severest critics admit that he showed remarkable promise, and had he lived, his fame would doubtless have spread during his lifetime to his native

land. But two years after his picture had been awarded the Gold Medal he was taken down with influenza while in Paris. Lung trouble followed and he died within a few days.

Even a brief attempt at appraising the merit of Peel's work requires a retrospective glance at the art of his period. The Paris in which he studied was echoing with the conflict between classicists and impressionists. Debarred from the Salon, several daring innovators were exhibiting in private galleries striking canvases, some of them strangely beautiful, others merely bizarre. Manet, with his broad flat decorative tones in figure subjects, and his *plein air* cult of landscape that aimed at catching evanescent effects of colour and atmosphere, was just coming into his own; Monet, his follower and associate, was charming unconventional connoisseurs with his brilliant sunlights and his translucent violet shadows achieved by touching tiny flecks of colour unmixed on the canvas; while Degas, Pissaro and others were producing curious work, consciously novel, imitating if anything the simplified decorative effects of Japanese colour prints. Opposed to this startlingly original school, were the more conservative followers of tradition, the members of the Institute, the recognized authorities of the day. Intent on mastering perfect technique, they studied and copied the best art of the past. The growth of realism in literature and art had inspired in them the desire for close adherence to nature—a desire that showed itself in the meticulous exactitude with which they painted huge canvases crowded with figures. At the time there was an especial vogue for oriental

and historical subjects. Constant, Boulanger, Gérome, from all of whom Peel took lessons, were leaders in the fashion; and their influence on Peel is revealed, amongst other ways, in his unfulfilled ambition to paint some pretentious historic subject.

It was in the classical school, with its respect for tradition, its love of form and careful composition, its delight in masterly technique, that Peel's art developed. From the prominent leaders of the school he received instruction—Gérome, Constant, Boulanger, Lefevre and Doucet. He seems to have been very little touched by the revolutionary spirit of the impressionists. To the modern lover of art, who is accustomed to the most curious and startling effects, who has come to look on an exhibition of painting as a bewildering display of novelty, his pictures may appear a little old-fashioned. But they are characterized by a note of unmistakable sincerity. Peel painted what he liked to paint—landscapes, children, simple people—and he painted as he wished to paint. There was no affectation in his work, no æsthetic pose. He was frank and honest both in feeling and execution.

Many of his earlier productions are faulty in drawing and composition. His figures tend to be stiff and flat; his landscapes are a little too precise and hard; but as he progressed in skill these faults became less and less noticeable. He developed freedom and ease, and especially in figure subjects he revealed incalculable promise. His was a progress that indicated the presence of real genius. An artist who could advance as rapidly as he advanced and who could accomplish what he did

in a brief life of thirty years, might, if given time, have produced anything. His improvement is most remarkably shown in the contrast between the two pictures, "How Bitter Life Is," and "After the Bath."

In the first picture the child, although exceedingly well done, remains only a figure in paint; his attitude does not convey an impression of spontaneity, naturalness. The pose has been assumed to bring out the artist's idea, and one can imagine the little fellow smiling into his arm with self-consciousness as he realizes what would seem to him the foolishness of his posture. But the second picture is quite different. The two children in it are painted with a technical skill and an understanding of child nature rarely equalled. They are children that any mother would love to bath, that any father would delight to take upon his knee.

Peel attempted a great many different kinds of subjects, but it is probably as a painter of children that he will be best remembered. He loved children and they took to him at once. They were always ready to pose for him—something most unusual, as any photographer will bear witness. In Paris he was known as "the child painter." After his death many students tried to imitate him in this branch of art, but without success. His master, Constant, so it is said, would look at such work, would sigh and say: "No, it is not right; it is no good. Ah! I had a pupil once—his name was Peel. He—he could paint children —but he is dead!" Copies of "How Bitter Life Is" and "After the Bath," together with another called "Waiting for the Bath," which represents a small auburn-haired

girl all ready for the tub, sitting on a white bearskin rug and dancing a *gerady* upon her dimpled knee, are on sale in picture stores all over Europe and America; while another of a surprised little boy looking at a toad is a great favourite for children's story-books.

Since Paul Peel's day art in Canada has been considerably developed and many capable and original artists are not only painting in Canada but are making a living by their art. It was significant of the period in which Peel lived that he had to seek his inspiration, his training, even his patronage abroad; but it is equally significant of the period in which we live that his most famous picture has come to our shores, let us hope to stay.

XV

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN

STEVENSON, writing from far-off Honululu to the editor of *Scribner's Magazine* regarding the serial publication of the "Master of Ballantrae" and other matters, remarked: "One Lampman has a good sonnet on a 'Winter Evening' in, I think, the same number." Stevenson's letter is dated 1889. The poem which caught his eye is a striking description of the last golden gleam of a winter twilight before the frosty night, "with silence and the sharp unpitying stars," settles down upon the city; and the young man who wrote it was a Canadian whose poetry was at the time being featured by *Scribner's Magazine.*

Such quiet discriminating recognition of his work was the success that Archibald Lampman attained—the distinction of having his verses published in a magazine of acknowledged literary standards, and the satisfaction of having them read with approval by a few readers of undisputed literary taste. Drummond in his poetry has since struck a vein of rich homely humour, Service a vein of colourful melodrama, both of which have caught the popular fancy; but to create a literary sensation was not in Lampman's power.

Nor was it, we may suppose, in his ambition. He took an unusual pleasure in the exercise of his art for its own sake. On the frontispiece of each book of verses he might have inscribed Bunyan's contented words: "I did it mine own self to gratifie." In this age when the man of ability is usually so "eager to forestall his immortality, and mortgage it for a newspaper puff," it is a real pleasure to recall a poet so modest and simple-hearted. Lampman's whole soul was wrapped up in the enjoyment of the beautiful but simple things of life.

The poet's early days were passed in the slumberous atmosphere of various village rectories. His father, an Anglican clergyman of mild disposition, but cultured tastes, was apparently content to minister to the spiritual needs of small rural parishes. From Morpeth, a picturesque village on the north shore of Lake Erie, where in 1861 Archibald was born, he moved to Perrytown near Port Hope, and thence almost immediately to Gore's Landing on Rice Lake. No more peaceful and beautiful spot, no more delightful cradle for a poet's fancy, than this little hamlet with the unpoetic name, could possibly be imagined. Nestling down by the water's edge and almost surrounded by thickly wooded hills, it sleeps the year around. Its pleasant houses peep from under the green branches of great trees in a most friendly old-fashioned way; and the deep clear body of water over which it looks is one of the loveliest in the Kawartha chain—as lovely as those far-famed lakes amongst which Wordsworth found a home. That tendency to seek his pleasures out-of-doors, to dream

contentedly over the sights and sounds of nature, may well have been awakened in the boy's mind by the charms of this secluded region.

But Gore's Landing, despite its pleasant aspect, seems to have been ill-fated for the Lampmans. The house which first served as the vicarage was so damp that the year they moved into it Archibald was stricken with rheumatic fever. For months he lay helpless in bed and when at length he was able to be about he was for some time unable to walk without crutches. But his father bought another more comfortable house; the fresh, salutary air of the locality helped youth to do its work; and the boy, though always rather weak and delicate, was in a year or two restored to health. But scarcely had he recovered when his father began to sicken. As long as he was able the good man stuck to his work, but in the end he was forced to give it up and move with his family into Cobourg.

Archibald's education began while his father was still rector of the church at Gore's Landing. Although he did not go to school until he was nine years old, instruction given him at home enabled him when he did so to progress creditably. At Trinity College School at Port Hope, a boy's academy modelled after the great English public schools, he won several prizes for scholarship; and when he entered Trinity College at Toronto, great things were expected of him. But the poetic temperament is not always willing to waste the sweetness of youth in long hours of study. Lampman did not disgrace himself on examinations; but neither did he do exceedingly well. He loved more than his books that

loosening of the tongue which is invited when three or four kindred spirits foregather to fill the hours with talk and the room with the incense of tobacco—that glowing mood in which youth convinces itself that all things are possible and that the world is a succulent oyster. His literary bent, which showed itself in his constant scribbling of verses, brought him the appointment of editor of his college magazine; and to making this paper a success he devoted a good deal of his time —perhaps more than his studies could afford. When he graduated in Classics in 1882, it was with the worthy but undistinguished standing of second-class honours.

Empty as his days had been thus far of stirring deeds and romantic adventures, they were to be from this time on even more uneventful. When he left college, being in some doubt as to how best to earn his livelihood, he turned to school-teaching, that convenient refuge of the undecided. But he found this profession not at all to his taste. In the classroom he could not keep order. His retiring disposition shrank from the necessity of dominating his pupils, and he was heartily glad when a way opened for his escape. Within a year of his graduation, through the influence of a college friend, he obtained an appointment in the Postal Department of the Civil Service at Ottawa; and there he remained, faithfully doing the routine work involved, until his death.

Ottawa is a pleasant city to live in—staid and dignified, friendly, but not gushing, taking itself and its weighty duties of government very seriously, but offering the cultured man an intellectual stimulus not found in many more pushful towns—and Lampman

dropped into its unexciting activities very naturally. He soon married, settled himself in a modest but comfortable home, and made an agreeable circle of friends. Reading was one of his chief enjoyments, and many of his evenings were spent in turning the pages of a favourite book—some solid volume of history or economics to be carefully studied, or some treasured book of verses to be read and dreamed over, and read again. But he loved most of all those evenings when a friend would drop in for a good talk. He himself was not an aggressive talker, but he had notions of his own on all sorts of topics, and he was just daring enough to add to a conversation the spice of adventure. Like every one in Ottawa, he loved to speculate on political topics, holding the opinion that Canada would be better independent of the Empire; and as time went on he developed into a mild socialist of the intellectual type.

Into the tame world of report-forms and desks, ink-pots, sober clerks, and quiet efficiency, which makes up the Postal Department, he dropped just as naturally. He quickly became a familiar figure about the halls and at his desk—a slight young man with long, wavy, auburn hair, brown moustache, glowing brown eyes and a very pleasant laugh. Although to his fellow-workers he seemed quite at home and very much one of themselves, his intimate friends knew a different Lampman, and were not at all surprised when in 1888 he published a volume of poetry.

Occasional poems by him had already appeared in various periodicals. *The Week*, of which Mr. Charles

G. D. Roberts was editor, had published a few; the *Century Magazine* had brought out others; but most of them had appeared in *Scribner's*. The best of these he selected and, adding a few new ones, prepared a collection of lyrics under the title *Among the Millet*. The difficulty of finding a publisher he avoided by bringing the little volume out at his own expense. He and his wife had just received a small legacy, which they both decided could be put to no better use than that of preserving his verses in attractive form. The book proved more successful than might have been anticipated. It put a little money into the family purse, and established Lampman's reputation as an authentic Canadian poet. Five years later a Boston firm brought out his second book, "Lyrics of Earth"; and after his death appeared his third and last volume, "Alcyone."

A critic need be neither very subtle nor very devastating to make short work of those who would place Lampman on the mountaintops. His diction is too frequently marred by a certain affectation to meet the more austere requirements of good taste. He is so much in love with being a poet that he cannot resist a phrase, however weak, if it seems poetic—"We in sorrow coldly witting," "moon-tipped dandelions," "the closing west acold." His versification, besides, is too self-conscious to have the charm of artlessness, and too faulty to achieve those intricate delightful harmonies that are the result of perfect artistry. And his fancy seldom takes wing. It hops and flutters and gives the impression of being a little timid—of being a bird that has just left the nest

and has not yet quite learned to fly. Too often, indeed, he descends to the merely trivial:

> "It was a bleak and sandy spot,
> And, all about, the vacant plot
> Was peopled and inhabited
> By scores of mulleins long since dead."

Yet why enumerate his shortcomings? Surely it is better to dwell on what a poet is than on what he is not. Let it be admitted without further ado that Lampman, when compared to one of the great masters of poesie, is as the marigold to the sun's eye; but let it be added immediately that even the marigold has its own fresh, dainty beauties.

If Hazlitt was right in putting the love of nature first in the mind of the poet, then Lampman was undoubtedly in the true succession. Nothing delighted him more than to get away from "the din and the glare" of the city into the fields "where the cool winds sweep," into the meadow lands "where the hollows are banked with violets flowering." In the evenings, on Sunday afternoons, on holidays—in fact whenever he could steal away from his duties—he would make for the country. But best of all were the three or four weeks in the summer when he could escape altogether from his desk, and, with one or two companions, launch into the wilds up the river from Ottawa. To hear all day the gurgle of water under a canoe's bow as it glided through the quieter reaches of some dark forest stream, or to feel the exhilarating lurch and rush of the frail craft as it shot

through some swirling rapids; and at night to listen to the music of the wind in the trees, to catch the fleeting perfume of a bed made deep and soft with balsam boughs, and at last to drop into that peaceful, dreamless sleep which follows a day spent out-of-doors—that was happiness. Botanizing was one of Lampman's hobbies, and in such surroundings he could ride his hobby to his heart's content. With a clear sense of freedom in his heart, and a copy of Gray's *Botany* in his pocket, he was king of the universe.

But, curiously enough, it was not the wilder aspects of Canadian scenery that inspired Lampman to the writing of poetry. He made no attempt to reproduce in verse that huge brutality of our northern wilderness, at once so lovely and so fierce, that primitive lure which glares from the work of some of our novelists with such melodramatic eyes; but contented himself with picturing the gentler, friendlier aspects of our more southern districts. His verse has a fragrance quite its own—an outdoor, fleeting fragrance that is hard to describe, yet which is unmistakably like the familiar scent of sweet clover.

We praise our poets for their venturesome flights of imagination: for their excursions into the vast and devastating struggle which surged around Napoleon; for their bold voyagings with Drake around the world; but we love them for their songs of familiar matters nearer home. Those common things in nature—those things that we have seen or heard in moments of great sorrow or great gladness, those things that we knew so well in childhood, those things that are so familiar

as to have become part and parcel of our being—those are the things that have for us an emotional significance. It is not by the waters of Babylon that we can sing; but by the little creek which ran bubbling through the reeds and grasses of the farm upon which we were reared. How much we lose of English poetry because we have never seen "the yellow cowslip and the pale primrose" and have not heard "the cuckoo with his twofold shout," nor the nightingale "singing of summer in full-throated ease," nor yet the skylark showering upon the earth his "rain of melody," is a point for speculation. But this much is certain: when a poet sings of our own land he touches us very closely.

It is here that Lampman excels. His poetic style may echo Tennyson or Keats, but his subject matter is almost wholly Canadian. Like a water-colour artist depicting in light, soft touches the scenes that fascinate him, he wandered through our forests and fields in that lazy but alert mood which takes note of everything. As we turn the pages of his collected poems, we catch glimpse after glimpse of Canada, each as characteristic as it is vivid: the frail-stemmed hepatica and the white trillium blowing in the spring woods; the cows filing home at sundown, lowing, great-chested, past meadows hazy with dandelions; the wind charging over a field of wheat; the last ploughman in November turning long black furrows as the thick-driven snow dims the forest and silently sifts through the stubble at his feet; the sturdy woodsmen, with iced beards and frozen eyelids, tramping beside their creaking carts and shouting to their great straining horses, whose flanks are frost-

fringed and whose nostrils are jetting steam; and the chimneys of the town, clear-cut against the frosty blue sky, each building into the silent air its pile of smoke to crumble silently. And in reading his verses we are conscious of many familiar voices: the song of the meadow-lark, of the thrush, of the robin, of the song-sparrow. But one note especially seems to haunt his pages—the prolonged trill of the bull-frogs piping with voices still and sweet and strange. It is a homely, pleasant sound, delightfully rural and delightfully peaceful, a sound that lulls us into a mood of vague but grateful memories.

Not all his poems are descriptions of nature. Some few of his sonnets are more or less thoughtful criticisms of certain aspects of life; and several of his longer poems are departures into the more pretentious styles of poetry. One of these, with the uninviting title "The Story of an Affinity," is a very creditable narrative poem somewhat in the style of "Enoch Arden." Had Lampman lived longer—he died of heart failure at the age of thirty-seven—his experimenting with various poetic forms might have led him successfully into wider fields. But it is futile to speculate. Instead of lamenting over what his early death may have prevented, it is more profitable to read again some of those pleasant nature verses of which the following bit of delicate impressionism is one of the best:

HEAT

From plains that reel to southward, dim,
  The road runs by me white and bare;
Up the steep hill it seems to swim
  Beyond, and melt into the glare.

Upward half-way, or it may be
  Nearer the summit, slowly steals
A hay-cart, moving dustily
  With idly clacking wheels.

By his cart's side the wagoner
  Is slouching slowly at his ease,
Half-hidden in the windless blur
  Of white dust puffing to his knees.
This wagon on the height above,
  From sky to sky on either hand,
Is the sole thing that seems to move
  In all the heat-held land.

THE END

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